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JANUARY 11, 2001 [53.18]

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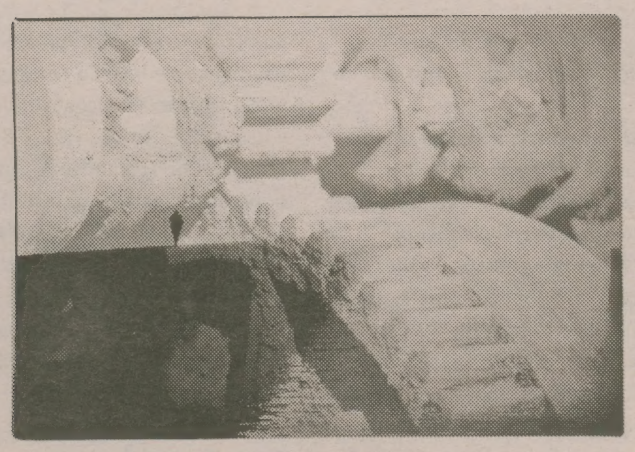

photo by Richard Warrington

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Absinthe soon to return to liquor store shelves

Van Gogh's old tonic makes a cleaner come back

by Miguel Strother

The green fairy is coming to British Columbia with a little nip in the flask.

The green fairy, or la Fée verte, is the mythical creature said to be conjured by use of the long-outlawed Absinthe, a wormwood-based herbal liquor. Banned in most countries around the turn of the 19th century, the drink is making a comeback and will soon be legally available in B.C.

Not to worry, say those who stand to make a buck. The refined version of Absinthe measures in with significantly lower doses of thujone, a convulsant poison and narcotic that can be extracted from the herb wormwood and has much the same effect as the THC found in marijuana.

Rather than the 260 parts of thujone per million that made up the drink of old, Hill's absinthe, the product being imported to B.C. from the Czech Republic, will harbour less than 1.5 parts of thujone per billion, says public relations manager for the Liquor Distribution Board, Kate Pasieka.

"Hill's still has wormwood in it but according to tests performed by Health Canada, they've been able to eliminate thujone, so there are no abnormal health risks," says Pasieka.

Only two Vancouver establishments (Lumier and the Chameleon) have placed orders for the liquor so it will only be made available through special order for now. But, if demand grows, it may be made available on liquor store shelves, she says.

Absinthe, which takes its name from the Latin name for wormwood (Artemisia Absinthium), was clearly the chronic tonic of many prominent artists in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It was said to induce psychosis, seizures, comas, and delirium. Van Gogh was reportedly bingeing on the stuff when he cut off his ear.

Absinthe is also said to have influenced some of period's most significant works of art, including van Gogh's *Still Life with Absinthe*, Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and Picasso's *Harlequin and his Companion*, to name a few.

Banned in most countries around the turn of the 19th century, the drink is making a come back and will soon be legally available in B.C.

Although many scientists consider thujone to be the main psychoactive ingredient in absinthe, there is widespread debate about the components of wormwood, the effect of thujone, and whether or not it sparks the famous reaction.

According to Matthew Baggott, a writer and scientist who has done extensive research on the drink, ingredients other than thujone that may have caused the psychoactive properties of old-school absinthe include extremely high levels of ethonol (up to 80 per cent), calamus and nutmeg.

However, wormwood has mythological and biblical roots that stem from long before the production of absinthe in the 19th century.

According to *Rodale's Illustrated Book of Herbs*, one popular legend says that wormwood sprung up behind the serpent's tail as it slithered from the Garden of Eden.

In the Book of Revelation, the star symbolizing the King of Babylon (Satan) is called Wormwood (Revelation 8: 10-11). It was the great star that fell from Heaven and poisoned one third of all the water on Earth.

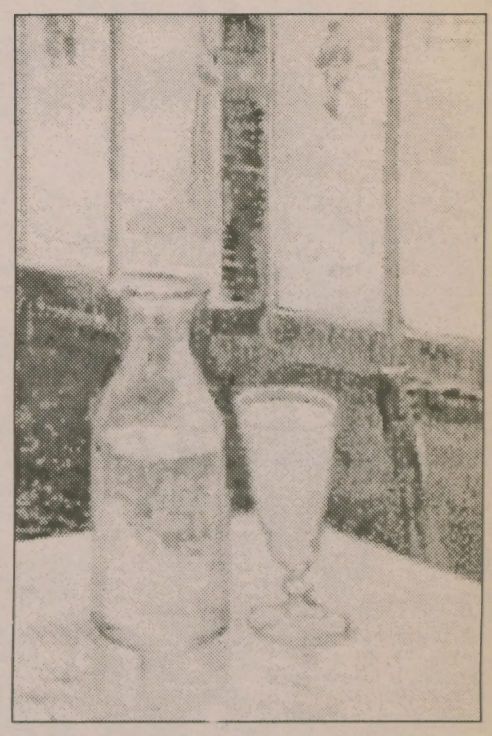
It was put in drinks that were supposed to stimulate Greek and Roman athletes and is still used in some healing compounds today.

So what effect will absinthe have on UVic when it does arrive in B.C.? Students cutting off their ears or spontaneous outbreaks of bohemian creativity to rival those of the aforementioned artists? Sadly, neither.

At 80 bucks a bottle wholesale, it will probably be too expensive for most students, who will more likely remain committed to inducing psychosis through the consumption of Felicita's cheapest draft.

For those who want more information on the devilish drink, *the Martlet* recommends checking out www.sepulchritude.com/chapelperilous/absinthe/index.html

For those who remain interested in trying the famed elixir when it does arrive in B.C., keep your ear to the ground.



van Gogh's *Still Life with Absinthe*

Classic recipe for preparing Absinthe

1. Put a tea strainer over a glass, unless you can find an absinthe spoon.
2. First pour the absinthe into the glass then place the strainer, with the sugar cube inside, over the glass.
3. Pack the ice over the sugar.
4. When the ice melts, the drink is ready.

For those without the patience to wait, cold water can be poured slowly over the sugar until it melts, but this makes for a weaker drink.

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Textbook prices sour new semester

Concentration in publishing industry drives prices up

by Melissa Jones

You're standing in line at the UVic Bookstore with an armload of your new textbooks. You're adding up the bill and wincing at the damage it's going to do to your bank account. The seemingly innocent cover of *Biology of Plants* doesn't look like it should be worth $105.95, but that's what will appear on your receipt. This thought may have crossed your mind once or twice: why are university textbooks so expensive?

What makes *Essentials of Programming Languages* cost $154.25, and *Molecular Cell Biology* set you back $107.75?

Publishers hate course packs.

Jim Forbes, Bookstore manager

According to the person who buys the books for the university bookstore, concentration of ownership in publishing and distribution has hurt competition and driven the prices up. Four distribution companies control the Canadian textbook market.

"Corporations are looking at the bottom line for the shareholders, not what's best for professors and students," textbook manager Suellen Guenther told *the Martlet*.

Guenther says she is constantly asking the distributors to lower prices but her requests fall on deaf ears.

"The corporate officers seem to brush off the feedback we give them. But I keep giving it anyway," Guenther says.

In the 15 years she's been working in the industry, book distributors have grown less responsive to the needs of the academic community, Guenther says. Small publishers have been bought out, and she says the Canadian market is too small relative to the United States to keep domestic prices low, given the smaller print run. Bookstore manager Jim Forbes says 75 per cent of the cost of a textbook is paid to the publisher, and the bookstore uses the other 25 per cent to pay their staff, the mortgage on the building, and other overhead costs like computers and software. One per cent of sales goes to UVic's department of student and ancillary services to fund programs like the employment centre, counselling services and the resource centre for students with disabilities.

"Our mandate from the administration is to break even financially," Forbes says

While some other Canadian universities lease their bookstores to private operators in order to turn a profit, Forbes says wages inevitably suffer.

"We're giving living wages to people," Forbes says. The 32 full-time staff and roughly 40 student staff make a minimum of $14.20 per hour, as mandated in CUPE's collective agreement.

The bookstore handles $10 million in sales annually, and Forbes says any surplus revenue is rolled over into the next year's operations. If hundreds of thousands of dollars were to accumulate, he said they could consider reducing the 25 per cent margin, but he doesn't foresee that happening.

Forbes says the bookstore is constantly developing ways for students to cut down on their textbook costs. These include buying back textbooks, offering course packs, and ordering used books from wholesalers. He says 16 to 19 per cent of all books sold at the UVic bookstore are used, while the national average is only 4 per cent.

Forbes concedes the publishing industry tries to get as much as it can out of students.

"It's always a game of cat and mouse with the publishers," Forbes says. Editions are updated every three years, and prices are inflated on new books to compensate for lost sales in the second and third years, once used books are circulating.

Course packs are a means of circumventing the publishing industry. Instead of buying six textbooks, a course pack will provide the readings from those textbooks, but without the cost of purchasing the whole book. The bookstore secures copyright over given articles or chapters, then produces the course packs on site. The price covers photocopying costs and royalties to the writers.

When the bookstore started offering course packs in 1994, only five or ten profs were involved. This January over 200 different courses use course packs.

"Publishers hate course packs," Forbes says.

He adds that the bookstore hopes to expand sales of used books, and he has been speaking at different departmental meetings to encourage profs to get their book lists in early so he can place orders with wholesalers and buy books from students.

The bookstore buys books that will be used in the upcoming semester for 50 per cent of the retail value. Those that aren't on the book list can be sold to a wholesaler for 15 per cent of the original price.

And for those who want to set their own price, the UVic Student Society's SUBtext works on a consignment system where students are compensated once their books sell. The store takes 10 per cent for offering the service.

"We are in a good partnership with Subtext," Forbes says.

Looking ahead to the future, he says by September students will be able to buy their textbooks online, and within two to three years digital textbooks will be available.

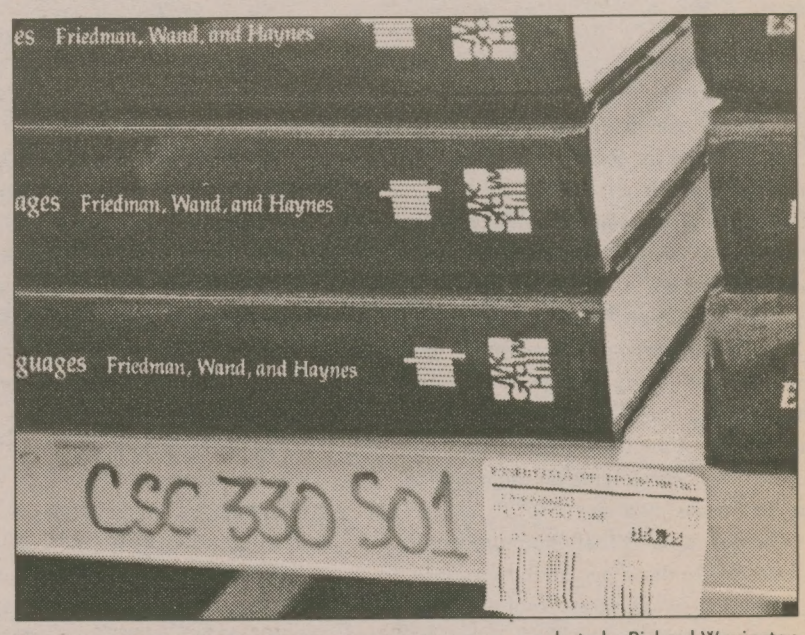

photo by Richard Warrington

Textbook prices breaking your bank account? Blame corporations.

on the spot

by Richard Warrington

How much do you think you'll have to spend on textbooks this semester? Have you ever dropped a course due to the cost of the textbook?

Renée Baron
humanities

$150, no.

Louise Bradbury
Camosun

$120, no.

Nadine Weckerle
2nd year humanities

$205.80, no.

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Sat (9:30am - 1:00pm)

Mapping UVic:
UVic Sustainability Project takes stock of campus

by Sarah Pullman

The UVic Sustainability Project asks students to think about the psychology of campus space by marking an X where it matters most. At mapping booths erected around campus, students can mark off places important to them, participate in 'mental mapping activities,' or simply fill out a questionnaire.

"Community mapping is democracy, learning, and getting to know you neighbours, all rolled into one," says Shane Thomas, coordinator of the UVic Sustainability Project (UVSP), a group working on the mapping project for past two years.

Thomas explains that community mapping is intended to make people think about their environment, working as a tool of self-reflection and community identity. The exercise provides information about how staff and students want to structure the campus.

While the UVSP has no policy-making power, Thomas hopes the information gained from the mapping exercise will be considered in the university's development plan.

Response to the community mapping booth has been positive, with Thomas and event organizer Lara Renehan observing certain trends from the students, staff, and administrators who participated.

Green spaces were marked as very important for recreational use. Recreational places in general – whether green or not – were given a high level of emphasis. Places with space for socializing and studying, as well as those providing food services, were noted frequently as "favourite places."

In the category of "subversive spaces," the definition of which was purposely ambiguous, participants marked the fountain, the SUB, Mystic Vale, and the area behind the Fine Arts building, among other places.

"One potentially valuable outcome of the community mapping activity was the identification of unsafe areas on campus," Thomas says. These included poorly lit paths and areas where motorists could collide with pedestrians or cyclists.

Participants also made suggestions about how they thought UVic could be improved. Students seemed less interested in new academic facilities and instead favour places where they could do things other than study. Suggestions included more places to "hang out" and a place to buy groceries "instead of over-priced prepared food."

Students also favoured places that facilitate a sense of community in general.

In light of anticipated growth at UVic in the years ahead, Thomas says activities like community mapping are crucial in order to maintain "campus democracy."

For more information on the UVic Sustainability Project and community mapping, e-mail uvsp@hotmail.com or call 721-0372.

photo by Sheldon Etheridge

UVic students favoured more places to "hang out" over new academic facilities.

Victorian joins delegation to Iraq to protest sanctions

by Ben Isitt

Victoria peace activist Terry Wolfwood is on her way to Iraq in an effort to bring international attention to sanctions she says have led to the death of 1.5 million people since the Gulf War.

She will join former US attorney general Ramsey Clark and an official delegation from the New York-based International Action Center on a week-long foray into the middle-eastern nation.

"I am going to Iraq to participate in challenging sanctions which I think are cruel and barbaric," Wolfwood told *the Martlet*.

"The sanctions are extremely broad and complex. They cover everything from coffins and hearing aids to toys and all paper, including books. They also cover all clothes, including shawls, and medical supplies, particularly medicines to treat cancer."

Wolfwood's delegation will intentionally defy the sanctions by donating $1-million US in medicines and medical supplies to the people of Iraq. She stops first for a meeting in New York January 8 before flying to Amman, Jordan, where she will travel overland to Iraq.

"Unless you're carrying bombs you can't fly to Iraq in an American plane," Wolfwood says.

She will speak in Toronto before returning to Victoria on January 24. While in Iraq, Wolfwood expects to visit hospitals, clinics, and the university, where she will speak to doctors, parents, and others about the effects of the sanctions.

Wolfwood thinks the provisions barring medicines are the most horrific, considering the widespread malnutrition and illness brought about by the Gulf War and subsequent sanctions. She says UN bombing destroyed the country's water and sewage systems, and that food and medicine shortages have led to much disease.

"The water is contaminated and there's sewage in the streets," Wolfwood says. "Gasoline is cheaper to buy than water in Iraq."

She said these problems are complicated by that fact that almost 1000 tonnes of depleted uranium poisons the soil, water, and air in the country. The heat and force contained in the warheads used by the West disperse depleted uranium into 'aerosol particles', which seep into water and linger in dust, says Wolfwood.

"Depleted uranium goes into the lungs easily because it's so small," Wolfwood says. "Children are particularly susceptible to radiation disease and birth defects."

Wolfwood says that since 1991, many new forms of cancer have developed in Iraq as a result of depleted uranium use and that's what makes the medical supplies so necessary. She also says the UN estimates that 1.5 million Iraqis have died as a result of the sanctions.

"Over half a million are children," Wolfwood says. "They continue to die at the rate of over 5000 per month."

Wolfwood adds that many UN officials who've worked in Iraq have resigned over the cruelty of the sanctions.

"I'd like to see Canada ignore the sanctions and work in the UN for the lifting of them," Wolfwood says. "I'd also like to see Canada engage in massive food and redevelopment aid for this once highly developed country, which has been bombed back into the stone age.

"The reason we're going is because innocent civilians are paying the price for the international sanctions, which they say are against the government. But it's really the people who are suffering."

Wolfwood has mixed feelings about her trip. While she is excited about the experience, she knows it won't be pretty.

"We will be witnesses to the genocide of a nation," Wolfwood said. "It's not going to be a very nice trip."

Terry Wolfwood will be speaking at UVic on February 6 at 7:30 p.m. For more information, contact the Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group (VIPIRG) at 472-4558.

For more info on the sanctions, please see: www.iacenter.org

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National news briefs

From one lawsuit to another

Just as Alliance leader Stockwell Day settled one lawsuit, a group of Alberta lawyers is considering legal action against the Canadian Alliance leader for using public funding to pay for the settlement of a defamation suit against him.

If filed, the case would state that Day was unjustified in using a legal defence fund for public employees to pay his legal costs.

The question of Day's right to use the fund is centred on whether he was acting in the scope of his duties as Alberta's provincial treasurer at the time.

Lorne Goddard, a lawyer and public school trustee, took Day to court over a letter he wrote to the *Red Deer Advocate* in April 1999.

In the letter, Day criticized Goddard for defending a convicted pedaphile. Day was acting as an MLA when he wrote the letter.

In the wake of the settlement, Day said he would access Alberta's Risk Management Fund after a ruling by provincial ethics commissioner Bob Clark that it was inappropriate for him to use private funding sources.

Clark found that Day would not be in a conflict of interest by using the fund, and asked the trial judge for support.

However, since the case was settled out of court, Day's eligiblity has not been determined.

Now the laywers want a judge to rule on whether Day should be allowed to use the fund. The cost of Day's defense has been estimated to be as high as $1 million, including $600,000 in damages Goddard was seeking.

The lawyers are also considering suing the Alberta government for breach of trust, breach of fiduciary obligations and negligence.

The Alberta Liberals have said they will use the Alliance's proposed policy on referendums to ask Albertans if Day should be allowed to use the fund.

The question would be tacked onto the provincial election ballot expected to be held March 8.

by Carmel Ecker

Watching for cold war tremors

While sparks fly between Russian and American presidents, the rest of the world watches for a reignition of the Cold War.

Accusations that Russia has moved short-range nuclear missiles into Kaliningrad – an important Russian outpost in Central Europe – are just the latest barriers standing between the American and Russian governments.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has ignored certain US international policy requests (such as a halt on selling weapons to Iran), accused several individuals of spying for the US and identified Washington as a potential threat.

Putin is concerned with president-elect George W. Bush's intentions to materialize a long-promised missile shield as well as outgoing President Bill Clinton's failure to destroy its second and third stages of MX Anti-Ballistic Missiles according to the START-1 treaty.

UBC Political Science professor Paul Marantz, however, said the friction may just be the result of new administrations getting used to their positions and each other.

"I wouldn't attach too much weight to current friction," he said, adding that it was too early to define either governments' impression of the other.

The Bush administration has criticized Clinton's foreign policy on Russia, pointing to major shifts in the way the two countries relate.

Marantz sees the establishment of the US missile defence as an event that could significantly affect relations between the two super powers. In the past, there was a "balance of terror," said Marantz, when both sides had nuclear weapons, but no substantial defence against each other.

If Bush pushes for his missile defence as he has promised, and gets it, that mutual fear would change. The US would have to withdraw from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty, which required that neither side build up such a defence, said Marantz.

Additionally, Russia would be compelled to develop something similar, an endeavour the country can't afford now.

That relations between the United States and Russia have never been warm adds to their current difficulties.

Because of Russia's size, history and geography, policy makers have never been able to decide if the West is a friend or a threat, said Marantz.

Putin's remarks and actions make the Russian leader look like he's taking a hard line with America. As relations between the two countries are still in a delicate balance, however, Putin is in the tough position of deciding when to disagree with the US and when to look the other way, Marantz said.

Putin has to look firm and not blindly follow the American lead, said Marantz. However, because of his country's economic dependence on the US, he has to be careful of which promises he follows through on.

For now, it's too early to determine whether relations between the two countries are likely to sour to the point of major conflict. As the new governments establish themselves, the world will watch and see how Putin and Bush react to one another.

by Carmel Ecker

No money gone now

Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) withdrew the $20-million donation it recently made to three universities in response to opposition from angry motorists.

"A large number of Manitobans have spoken and we have listened, and we recognize that we made a mistake," Becky Barrett, the minister responsible for MPI, said at a press conference Wednesday.

Last week, the Crown Corporation announced it would donate two-thirds of a $30-million surplus to the University of Winnipeg, Brandon University and College Universitaire de Saint-Boniface.

Some MPI ratepayers, however, responded in protest, demanding the surplus be rebated back to them. Twenty million dollars, they claimed, would have allotted each ratepayer a $38 rebate.

Students and faculty say they are upset over MPI's decision.

"The University of Winnipeg Students Association is extremely disappointed," said the union's president Les Klassen. "We expected more."

The Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) accused MPI of giving in to a "vocal minority" of disgruntled ratepayers.

"MPI is owned by all Manitobans, not only motorists. It was very reasonable for MPI to allocate some of its public funds to the universities," said Robert Marriott, the Federation's Manitoba representative. "The donation to the universities was part of a well-considered, long-standing and widely-supported program of involvement in the community."

Marriott said the CFS will now call on the province to come up with funding equal to the amount the three institutions were originally promised.

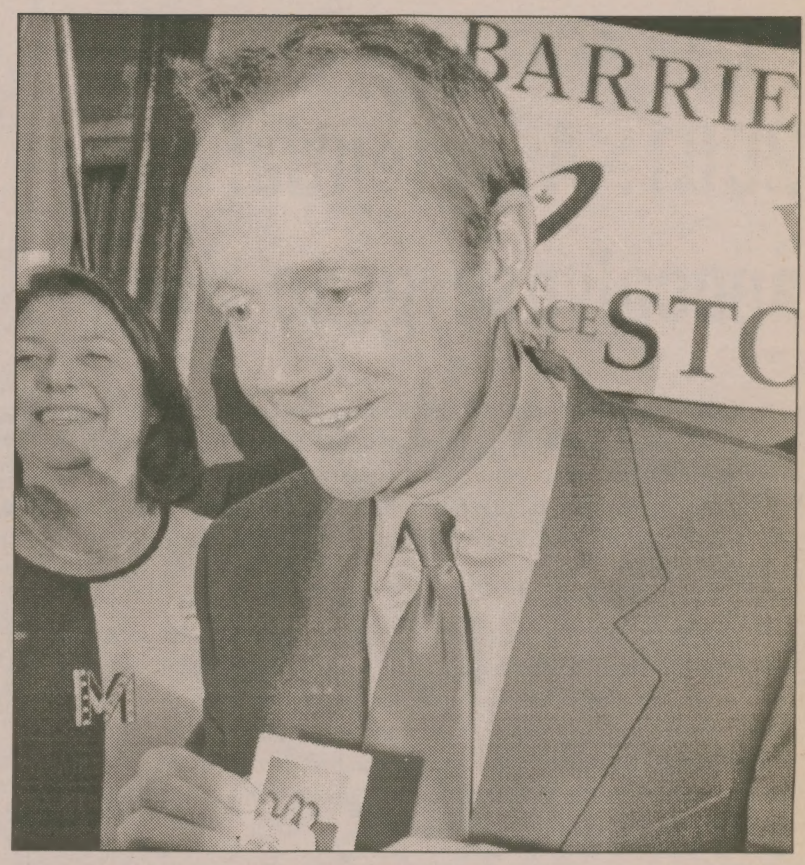
Tim McKay, Brandon University student union president, said he was disappointed by the announcement. "I think it is a travesty. It's a sad state that the public outcry came from not understanding what the money is for."

The University of Winnipeg was last week given $14 million, which it had earmarked for restoration of its crumbling Wesley Hall – a historic building now draped in netting to protect students and staff from falling brickwork.

Brandon University had planned to spend the $5 million it was originally allocated on enhancing its nursing program.

St. Boniface said it would use its $1-million share of the donation in part to develop a new student centre.

by David Leibl WINNIPEG (CUP)



Stockwell Day stops in Barrie, Ontario while campaigning in the recent federal election.

NEWS?

Are you interested in what's going on beyond Victoria? Are you interested in writing about it for *the Martlet*?

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EDITORIAL:

2001: A potential apocalypse gone awry

Well, the clocks rolled over, the ball dropped, the New Year began and we're all still here. Despite all the trepidation and expectation, we managed to make it to the year 2001 without a computer glitch-inspired nuclear holocaust or fiery biblical rapture from which only the righteous would be spared. And I think I speak for everyone (and by 'everyone' I mean 'me') when I say: Damn!

Now in all fairness, I never expected the universe to end in 2000. Oh, I had my fingers crossed like everyone, but I never really figured it would go down. It would have been too obvious. For a whole year everyone was talking about, predicting or planning for the end of the world. What fun is an apocalypse if everyone's already got a bomb shelter filled with canned goods and comic books to hole up in when eternity comes a-knocking? No, no, it would have simply been too expected.

But 2001, now that had possibilities. After the collective paranoia of Y2K turned out to be nothing more than a cheap excuse to sell software upgrades, everyone let out a sigh of relief and went about their day. Guards were let down, teeth were unclenched.

And that's why January 31, 2000 would, I think we can all agree, have been the perfect time to end the world. Blind-side everyone when they weren't ready. Couldn't you just see Dick Clark in Times Square: "Well all you hepcats, it's only a few more minutes before the ball drops and we ring in the New Year, and so from all the people here at CBS, have a very happy- hey, what's that light in the sky, AAARRRRGH!" It would have been great. (This is of course a ludicrous scenario. We all know that not even a nuclear war could finish Dick Clark.)

Unfortunately, it's now January and while I'd hate to jump to any conclusions, it seems likely that we didn't all die. I think there's only one conclusion we can draw from all this: the universe has absolutely no sense of situational irony.

Of course, we were never really worried about the apocalypse in the first place. After all, if the world really did come to an end, who'd be around to care about it? No, the real concern was with the aftermath, the fighting with mutants over the last few turnips in a post-nuclear wasteland or trying desperately to get our solitaire programs to work after the Y2K bug. As proof of just how egocentric the human race is, we couldn't even imagine an end of the world that we didn't get to hang around to see. After all, what use is the nuclear holocaust if there isn't at least one Chuck Heston left to pound the beach and scream, "You maniacs, you blew it up!"

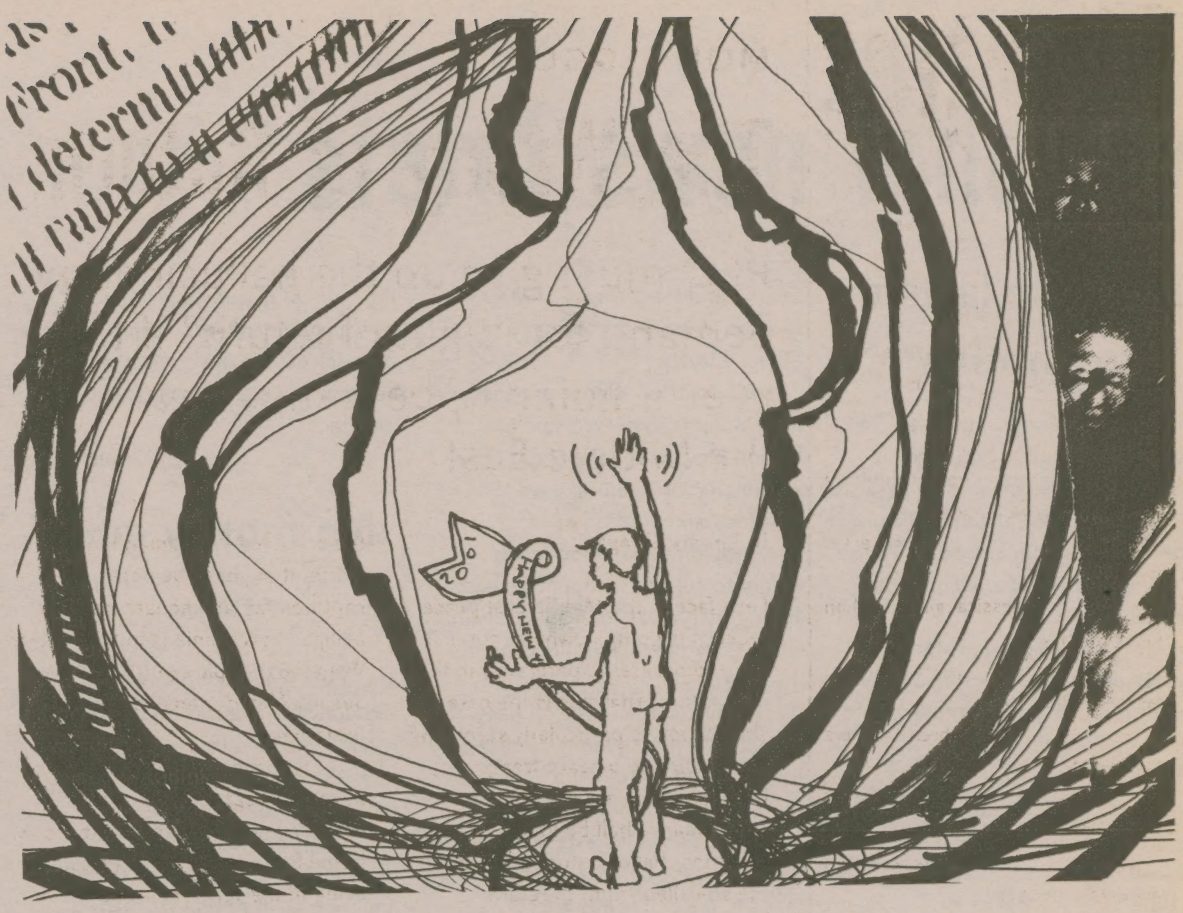
But me, I was actively hoping for the end of the world or, at the very least, the end of the human race. Think about it. No more human beings running around causing wars, famines, pestilence and death. No more violence or stupidity. No more bigotry or intolerance. No more shallow consumerism or rampant commodification. No more wars being fought for cheap oil or rivers being polluted for the sake of better detergent. No more kids working in sweat shops so we can get cheap Nike shoes. No more movies and television shows pandering to the lowest common denominator. No people being beaten and killed because they're different than us, no more elections being usurped through violence and chicanery. No more of our freedom being sold for profits and our blood being spilled for empty ideologies.

Now I can already hear people out there warming up typewriters getting ready to whip me off a list of all the neato things humanity has been responsible for. Look, Mussolini made the trains run on time, okay? We're not doing anybody any good by trying to pretend that humankind is a rousing success.

You really want to impress me with humanity's 'boundless potential'? Get out there and do something. Don't just accept it when the television says that everything's okay, there's nothing to worry about and anyways here's another four hours straight of *Friends*. Accept that the world sucks and that we have a moral imperative to fix it. Then go out into the world and get involved. Protest the injustices, organize the disenfranchised, oppose the oppressors, do all the stuff you already know you should do without me telling you. Sure it's going to be a long battle and yes we probably won't fix everything. But at the very least we'll be able to say we tried. Who knows, maybe when the year 3000 rolls around, I'll actually care if we all die.

by Simon Glezos

Editorial topics are decided on by staff at editorial meetings, every Monday at noon in the SUB B011. Editorials are written by one or more staff members, and are not necessarily the opinion of all staff.



SOAP BOX:

An argument to abolish New Year's festivities

by Craig Battle

So there I was, New Year's Day, chatting with a few friends over a mushroom and cheese omelette at the White Spot, when the inevitable happened: someone asked me for my New Year's resolutions.

My first reaction was to duck, cover and protect them just as I would my omelette should my brother suddenly pop in from Edmonton. Then I remembered I had none, and replied, "I don't know."

In retrospect, I came up with a few resolutions. (Before I list them, I should clarify that by "resolution," I actually mean, "A lofty goal with the purpose of fixing things I'm currently fucking up.")

1. Stay away from casinos.
2. Limit the use of pop lyrics in everyday speech.
3. Have more sex.

These are pretty self explanatory. I once foolishly let someone convince me I could beat the roulette table, and I consistently baffle strangers with plagiarized phrases like, "Doing it all for the nookie." Finally, "Have more sex," means what it means. If I elaborate, it might get embarrassing.

But, after carefully reading and re-reading the list, I'd actually like to strike them from the record. I may just resort to my fail-safe resolution, "Avoid scurvy," which I should have unleashed on New Year's Day and been done with it. Honestly, I have yet to fail at it, and no one asks questions.

In any case, I've discovered something. I don't like New Year's resolutions. I don't understand the point of putting undue pressure on yourself with no good cause.

I mean, if you smoke, you remind yourself to quit often enough on your own time. Why do you have to write it down, and file it under "resolution?" I personally believe I resolve enough throughout the year.

For instance, last semester I decided to take up running both for the health aspects and the concurrent envy. As I ran through about five kilometres of quiet neighbourhood, I pictured myself at the 2004 Olympics, accepting the gold medal while Bob Costas marvelled at the fact that I began running at 20.

The next night I ran again. Same time, same distance, same thoughts, same results. However, by Tuesday I had trouble walking and Wednesday was even worse. By Thursday I had given up on the Olympics, and I haven't ran since.

The only difference between my decision to start running and any regular resolution was timing. My particular timing was spectacular. At least now I don't have to deal with friends and family asking, "So Craig, how are the Olympics looking? Still on track?"

So, next year I suggest we all resolve to not officially resolve anything. Make your lofty goals whenever you feel like it, and feel free to keep them a secret.

While we're at it, I wouldn't mind eliminating the New Year festivities altogether. While I do enjoy a good house wrecker now and then, and this year's was sweeter than most, I just can't get past the weight of the event, and the horrific expectations.

We don't need it. Sure, it allows me a day to take stock of my life and see how far I may or may not have come in the last year, but then what's my birthday for? I usually take unhealthy stock of my life for a solid week (last year I had charts). Why do I need to do it twice?

As well, we can drink beer all night on St. Patrick's Day, drink solely to forget on Christmas, and kiss people at midnight on Valentine's day. (It's not a tradition yet, but just you wait – I know people.)

Like I said, the whole thing is simply undue pressure, and I refuse to be bullied by convention. By the way, refusing is not in any way to be confused with resolving. Refusing is much more attractive and aloof, as in, "Oh that's so bourgeois."

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If you want more information contact Editor Gillian Jerome or Managing Editor Meesha Chan in the Martlet office (SUB B011), or call 721-8361.

Applications should be dropped off in *the Martlet* office by January 19th at 4:30 pm.

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MONOLOGUE:

The Wrong of Return

PLO must give up the hallucinatory demand for "right of return" if there is ever going to be lasting peace in the Middle East

by Jeremy Shragge

Let's face it, the Middle East peace process is going nowhere, nor is it likely to progress appreciably in the near future. That this is the case should not be particularly surprising. In acceding to a peace treaty between themselves and the Israelis, Palestinians shall be forced to bury their near-hallucinatory demand for the so-called "right of return."

This policy, standard Arab dogma since Israel's War of Independence (1948), states that all Palestinian refugees who were forced to flee from territory that is now part of the Jewish state during the various Arab-Israeli conflicts should be allowed to return along with their descendents.

And while the right of return is the most direct means for the achievement of the ultimate Palestinian fantasy, the creation of an Arab state in the entirety of Palestine, it represents a somewhat less rosy eventuality for Israelis: the eradication of the Jewish state.

The fact that Israel, through the overwhelming might of its Defence Force, has had this ridiculous fantasy interred six feet underground for thirty years is beside the point. Palestinian Authority – formerly PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, along with his cronies over at the Arab League – remains intransient in its refusal to accept that peace with Israel means giving up all claims and designs on Jewish territory. Yet this acquiescence is unquestionably the vital trade-off.

Recently, in a last-ditch effort to end the three months of bloodshed that has gripped the West Bank and Gaza, outgoing US President Bill Clinton has advanced a simple but potentially breakthrough outline for a peace agreement. Under it, Israel would give up all but a modicum of the occupied Palestinian territories – which, it ought to be noted, they captured fair and square from the belligerent Jordanians in the Six Day War (1967) – plus much of the already Arab-dominated areas of Jerusalem.

In exchange, the Arabs would have to accept that their new country, and not Israel, is the proper home for the millions of Palestinians living in the Territories, and thus abandoning the right of return dogma.

Until the 1993 Oslo Peace Accord, wherein the Palestinians finally accepted the right of Israel to exist in what was British/Turkish Palestine, the right of return was one of the prime motivators of the crusade for a Palestinian homeland.

With this in mind, it is highly paradoxical and more than a little troubling that Mr. Arafat obstinately refuses to surrender the right of return in exchange for a lasting peace. After all, with nearly 4 million Arab refugees purporting to have a claim to a piece of the Jewish state, there seems little difference between the old Palestinian strategy (the destruction of Israel through terrorism) and the new one (the insistence on right of return).

The reality is this: while issues of sovereignty over East Jerusalem and the Temple Mount are emotionally charged for Israelis, they are not nearly as integral to the security and prosperity of the Jewish state as is the right of return. Therefore, Israel, with a population of only 5.5 million, can never, by its very definition, allow upwards of 4 million penniless, uneducated, ill-trained, anti-Zionist Arabs to flood its borders in exchange for peace – or anything else for that matter.

Furthermore, it is patently offensive for the foreign ministers of the Arab League to call the right of return "sacred" and non-negotiable when the very issue of the Palestinian refugees was created by Arab nations in the first place.

"The hypocrisy," a recent Globe and Mail editorial noted, "is staggering." In the first place, every single war that Israel has been forced to fight since its independence was instigated by one or more of its Arab neighbours.

Secondly, over the past 52 years, no Arab nation would accept the Palestinian refugees for the sole reason that their continued existence as displaced persons was an excellent excuse to attack and (attempt to) obliterate the Jewish state.

Thirdly, approximately 500,000 Palestinian refugees were forced from or willingly left their homes during the War of Independence and the other Arab wars of aggression – a far cry from the 4 million that exist today.

Furthermore, more than half a million Jews were violently expelled from Arab nations after the Israeli triumph of 1948. What is the Arab League willing to do about the injustices suffered by these people? In this case, what is good for the goose is apparently not nearly as good for the gander.

The Palestinians are currently as near to realizing the dream of a homeland as they have ever been. And, if the pollsters are correct, the closest they are going to be for a very long time. (Dovish Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak is on his way to losing next month's election to the much more conservative Ariel Sharon.) Now is the time for Mr. Arafat and the leaders of the Arab world to seize the opportunity for peace. If they let it evaporate because of an offensive and utterly intolerable principle, they, and not Israel, shall be responsible for the senseless deaths of hundreds of their brethren. For as much as the Jewish State hungers for peace, the pacification of the Palestinians is not worth the price of Israel's suicide.

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Submissions for monologue and student voice are always accepted from students by email at **martlet@uvic.ca**

"Fehrming" in Cape Breton:

Working the organic farm circuit in Canada

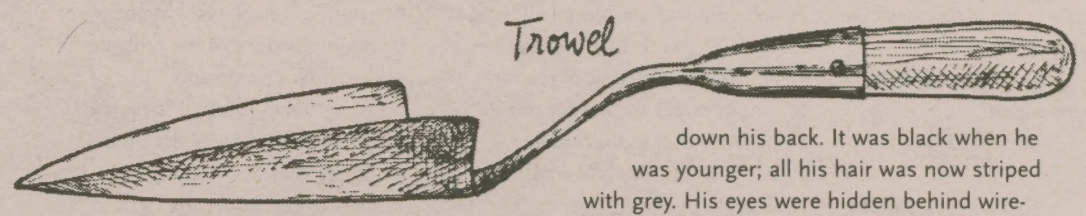
In Nova Scotia, you refer to every direction as "going down," even if you're going north.

by Michelle Deines

On the map you can't see it. All you see are blue lines for rivers, thick black lines for the roads and black dots for cities. You don't see the strips of tar snaking the Trans-Canada highway to repair fractures in the pavement from last winter's frost. You don't see the fields of potatoes in New Brunswick, planted into neat rows of green and deep brown. You don't see the chaos of cars converging onto the city of Halifax, or the contrasting calm of the long, thin road to Cape Breton Island, until it finally swings to the left and across the Causeway, and then up onto the island itself.

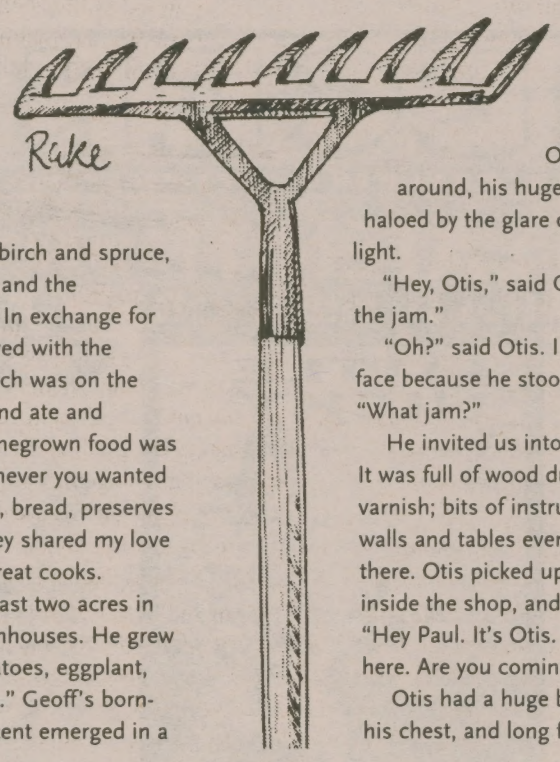
While in Cape Breton, I worked as a WWOOFer (Willing Worker on Organic Farms) at a 200-acre farm near St. Ann's Cove – land that had at one time been owned by farmers who spoke only Gaelic. About a hundred and sixty years later, it's now owned and inhabited by Geoff, Mary Ann, and their two children. All that's left of the old farm house is its foundation, a rough square of old stones sunk into the ground, overgrown by tall grass and young birch trees.

Geoff picked me up in his silver Jetta at the Lobster Galley, a restaurant located where the Cabot Trail meets the Trans-Canada. (The Cabot Trail is a road that travels the perimeter of the Island.) He wore white pants dirty at the knees and smelled of garlic.



As he gave me a tour of the property, Geoff asked that I work four hours a day, for six days a week – a fairly easy task to accomplish in the beauty of rural Nova Scotia – amidst a forest of birch and spruce, a friendly dog named Luna and the occasional red-tailed hawk. In exchange for my work on the farm, I stayed with the family in my own room which was on the third floor of their house, and ate and cooked with them. The homegrown food was incredible: fresh salad whenever you wanted it, garlic, broccoli, potatoes, bread, preserves and homemade yogurt. They shared my love of food and proved to be great cooks.

Geoff's garden was at least two acres in size and included two greenhouses. He grew carrots, corn, squash, tomatoes, eggplant, garlic, peas and "podadoes." Geoff's born-and-raised Cape Breton accent emerged in a few words, particularly "podadoes." Being late-July and far past the prime planting season, most of the work that I did was maintenance: I picked peas (tons of peas, probably about thirty pounds worth while I was there), watered plants in the green house, picked and washed spinach, and helped Geoff make his garlic-top pesto. Geoff and Mary Ann happened to be busy with family gatherings off the farm during the time that I was there, and so much of my time was spent alone.



Even then, however, I managed to meet a few of the people who lived in St. Ann's Cove: the couple who run the local library inside an old white school bus that they drove through the neighbourhood every Wednesday; I met the folks who dropped by in their trucks and cars to buy veggies from the garden; I met a man named Otis who lived up the hill from the farm who makes his living as a luthier – a person who builds stringed instruments. And not only that, he was also a fiddler, which caught my interest, being a fan of folk music and a novice fiddler myself.

One evening, Geoff and I walked up to Otis' house by invitation of our mutual friend Paul. Geoff called out a hello when we caught him walking into his house, and Otis' head tossed around, his huge frizzy hair and beard haloed by the glare of the motion-sensor light.

"Hey, Otis," said Geoff. "We're over for the jam."

"Oh?" said Otis. I still couldn't see his face because he stood in front of the light. "What jam?"

He invited us into his workshop anyway. It was full of wood dust and the smell of varnish; bits of instruments hung around on walls and tables everywhere. Paul was not there. Otis picked up the phone he had inside the shop, and said into the receiver, "Hey Paul. It's Otis. I hear there's a party here. Are you coming?"

Otis had a huge beard that hung down his chest, and long frizzy hair that hung down his back. It was black when he was younger; all his hair was now striped with grey. His eyes were hidden behind wire-rimmed glasses: he reminded me a little of Merlin.

Otis also had one of the most amazing ears for music that I have ever witnessed. He was kind enough to let me scratch out a tune on one of his violins, and as I did so, he would listen, slowly pick up his fiddle, and after about a minute or so, he would begin to play along with me, note for note. When Paul finally showed up, the three of us played a few tunes together while Geoff sat on the floor listening, tapping his feet and occasionally sneaking a sip from a bottle of whiskey he had stashed in his coat pocket. Eventually Geoff left for home, and I put my instrument down and just listened to the two of them playing tunes together in the darkened shop.

I knew that I had only touched on the surface of the music community there, and how Geoff and Mary Ann were connected with it, when I mentioned to Geoff that I had once seen Jerry Holland perform in Victoria. He played at a barn dance hosted by Daniel Lapp at the United Church Hall in Fairfield. It was a blast: tons of dancing and good music. Jerry Holland is a fiddler from Cape Breton who can really spin a tune; he also writes music for fiddlers like Natalie MacMaster. Anyway, Geoff didn't react when I told him this, but only pointed to the two black and white kittens mewing at us through the screen door and said, "Those are Jerry Holland's cats."

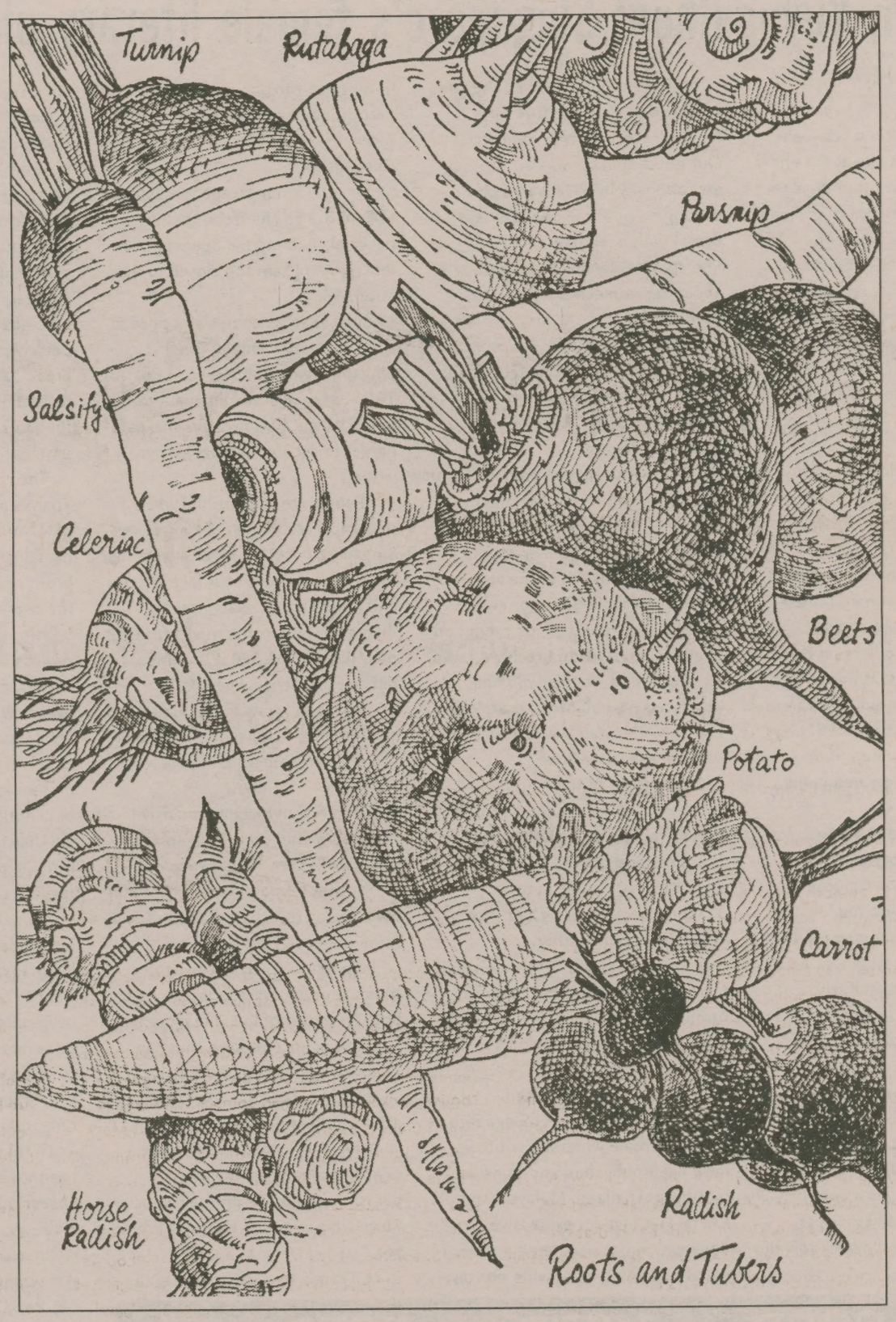
I left Geoff and Mary Ann's farm a little earlier than perhaps I would have liked to. To begin the journey back home, Geoff dropped me off at the Lobster Galley and I got picked up by the shuttle bus to take me to Truro. I sat beside an old lady going down to Halifax (in Nova Scotia, you refer to every direction as "going down," even if you're going north), and at one point during our conversation, she as me how I liked fehrming.

"Fehrming?" I asked. It was either that or 'firming.'

"Yes," she said. "How did you like fehrming?"

It dawned on me that she meant farming. Ahhh. Fehrming. Podadoes. Going down to Glace Bay. I get it.

"I loved it," I replied, finally, after having asked her to repeat herself several times. "It was great."



Afternoons spent outside, digging in the dirt, catching rides from coast to coast; a chance to meet other travellers and live with the locals.

Willing Workers on Organic Farms

by Bren Simmers

Although it is January, April looms in my mind with promises of sun. The freedom of term brings along with it the euphemism "gainful employment." Having lived in Victoria for five years, I have little enthusiasm left for the regular contenders such as day camps, house painting, tree planting, or hawking plastic killer whales on Government Street.

I want to travel, to see this messy country in all its East-West glory. I'm scheming for an inexpensive way to see Canada, not its packaged representations.

Afternoons spent outside, digging in the dirt, or catching rides from coast to coast; a chance to meet other travelers and live with the locals. I want to learn how to grow my own food, to bathe in the sun (and rain), and to share skills. I can't think of a more ideal way to spend four months than to work my way across Canada in exchange for room and board.

Over 200 organic farm owners in B.C. host WWOOFers (Willing Workers on Organic Farms) while another 200 farm owners across the country are ready for workers. The exchange program began 15 years ago with only a handful of farms in the Maritimes. Through letters of introduction, founder John Vanden Heuvel has seen it grow across the country. He adopted the idea from Britain, where it was established as an exchange between city and country folk, called Working Weekends.

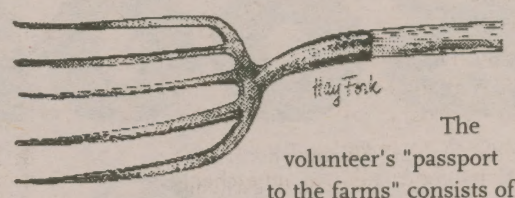
The purpose of WWOOF Canada is to help organic farmers by providing labour and to teach others about organic methods. Over 1000 volunteers a year take part annually, the majority of whom are women. About half of the volunteers are Canadians, with the rest coming from countries such as England, Germany, Japan, Korea and the U.S.

"Farm" is a loose definition for yoga centres, vineyards and market gardens all taking their place alongside more traditional farms or homesteads.

The experience can be incredibly fun, but like any other travel, it has the potential for disaster. The exchange between host and volunteer is based on trust as hosts invite strangers into their homes and families. WWOOFers need to be open to someone else's lifestyle. The ideal candidate is there to learn and can approach every task as significant in relation to the larger picture of harvest and renewal.

The average stay at a farm is one to three weeks, though some stay a few days or a few months. In the last five years, more farms have stayed open year round. Most hosts do take a month or two off to recoup, experiencing what John, a veteran host, refers to as being "WWOOFed out." He laughs, his voice low and full of wood smoke. "You need to take a break from the constant stream of strangers in your home sometimes."

When speaking about WWOOFing, John likes to use the word help instead of work. You're not punching a clock like you do at home he says. On average a volunteer is asked to help for four to six hours a day and for five or five and a half days a week. An average day might be nine to twelve with a break for lunch and then two to four or five.



The volunteer's "passport to the farms" consists of a 32-page booklet with listings and contacts. This booklet, updated twice a year costs $30 and entitles the volunteer to work for a year. The volunteers are then responsible for contacting and making arrangements with hosts.

WWOOFing isn't restricted to Canada alone. It is an international phenomenon with opportunities in England, New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii and other States to mention a few. The WWOOF Canada web site has links to international sites. For contact info see www.member.tripod.com/~wwoof or email John Vanden Heuvel at wwoofcan@uniserve.com. An updated booklet will be available in late January.

PROFILE

Tham Yuyng-Ghee: Singapore's female literary pioneer

by Jessica Gin-Jade Chan

A small cemetery tucked between waves and old rocks sits at the end of Foul Bay road. No more than 30 graves slie in the patches of grass, all dated from the previous century. This is where the pioneers of Canada's oldest Chinatown now reside; once rail layers and miners for British Columbia, now inhabitants of a forgotten beachtown. Yellowed grass covers these headstones, seldom bedecked with fresh flowers or rice offerings.

Far from the hindrances of city bustle, I find this an ideal spot for sun-tanning with a good book in hand. I even have a favourite headstone: a large marble structure facing the sea. In summer, I often use its broad structure as a backrest, while the two small pillars on either side are my armrests. It was in this position that 63 year-old Mrs.Tham Yuyng-Ghee first encountered me, lounging on the doorstep of her beloved ancestor in my neon pink bikini.

She had appeared at a particularly inopportune moment – I was engaged in tracing the Chinese characters engraved on the headstone, breasts hanging level with her grandfather's photograph. As I struggled to clothe myself, she looked me over and laughed.

With a short-handled brush of coconut bristles in hand, she proceeded to sweep off the graves. Her figure was small and hunched from grave sweeping, her hair coarse as the stringy grass at her feet. I merely thought she was a curiously wealthy grave-sweeper. Her open laughter had displayed a back row of gold teeth.

One year later, I crossed the strait to attend a private lecture for Singaporean writers in Vancouver. Our guest speaker was an exceptionally lively lady in a blue cheong-sam (a tradional Chinese dress) with oiled hair and a neat bun. She spoke at length about writing about her homeland away from home.

"That's impossible. A writer cannot present accurate facts if she is not immersed within the society she writes about." But I refused to accept her logic.

"When you maroon yourself on an island, you fail to see the larger picture of home. Imagine living inside a well and thinking that is home!" She laughed at the absurdity of her projection. The room was dazzled by a spontaneous exhibition of glittery gold teeth. I realized I was arguing with a woman who had witnessed my half-dressed exploits a year ago. The stately writer in blue was my 'grave-sweeper.'

"Of course. At the Foul Bay cemetery. You were paying respects to my grandfather's grave," she said. "I understand the two of you were intimate."

This characterizes Tham Yuyng-Ghee, Singapore author and researcher. In short: When the world frowns at chaos and the extra-ordinary, when the normal turns mad, Thum Yuyng-Ghee perks up her ears.

Born in China and raised in Singapore, she is one of Singapore's pioneer female writers. Her books have been published and translated in Burma, Thailand, Malaysia and China. Her love for expressive observation has generated a series of equally scathing and loving portrayals of Singaporean society. Her poignant perceptions have earned her a nickname, "The Lady in Cheongsam."

We walk amongst the tombstones at Foul Bay as she recounts this, delicately holding the opening of her loose cheongsam top closed in the strong wind.

Such success comes at a price in a small country. One of the first Singapore women to write in English, Tham steps over the limelight to go to work daily. She says this makes it harder to secure material for her writing.

"People are less truthful when they know recording is being done. Singapore is such a small island, it's impossible to have your face in print and hope no one recognizes you thereafter. I thank the media for their patronage of me, but it is sometimes difficult to interview people.

"Everyone wants to be quoted," she remarks, bemusedly. "They don't seem to remember that I only write fiction."

Good fiction dictates extensive research on her part. "A misplaced detail makes any reader suspicious. I try my best to make facts accurate in my selected time frames. I can't remember everything, so I ask."

In her stories, an enamel cup must be of the exact four-inch high, lime green tint of the Singapore 50s. A child's school uniform must be ironed and starched to the strict standards of Singapore Chinese schools in the 60s.

"The reader has to believe the rules in order to believe the punishment I inflict on the character. Rules were so much looser in the 70s."

In Tham's eye, inaccuracy is sacrilegious.

Such headstrong dedication is reflected in Tham's female protagonists. Often dubbed as "manipulators" by their male counterparts, these heroines systematically perceive, analyze and break cultural restrictions by enlisting the tools of the human psyche.

The content of Tham's stories isn't new: young girls breaking betrothal promises, suffering maidservants becoming educated professionals. However, critics gush over how these heroines conduct their escapades.

While her success is mainly based on her witty and accurate renderings of historical Singapore, this is not her full drawing power. According to her, truth is not the only commodity readers want.

"In narrating reality, I have to remember that what may be true in life may not pass in fiction. Readers want to believe what they think is believable. I only try to recreate this projected reality.

"As a writer, I cannot disappoint my readers. Please bear in mind I only write fiction."

Given fact is stranger than fiction, I cannot but wonder at Tham's obsession with the extraordinary. However, she holds a special reverence for the familiar ordinary. Her writing retreat at the end of Foul Bay Road hosts a ceremonial altar dedicated to the memory of her parents and a grandfather she crossed three continents to find. What's unusual about her respect is her uncertainty regarding his identity.

Following a tip from an angry grandmother one night, Tham learned that her grandfather had abandoned his wife and kids in search of a better life in the "Good West of Money." Like many other immigrants, he promised to send for his family later. The difference was, he never did. Let down and frustrated, Tham's grandmother later left on a junk to Singapore.

Perhaps the attributes of Tham's heroines trace their roots back in family history. Standing before her grandfather's grave, Tham admits her doubt.

"I had the characters of my grandfather's name, and I knew he sailed to North America to rake gold in the rail business. It was pure chance I hit upon this cemetery years ago while looking for a writing retreat amongst the Gulf Islands."

The Islands had proven too isolated for the city-accustomed Tham. Sensing her disappointment, her contact recommended the ocean-facing Foul Bay. Not only was Tham charmed by the view, she caught her fancy upon a graveyard with mostly Chinese headstones. Her excitement mounted when she discovered a tombstone with Chinese characters that mirrored her grandfather's to the exact stroke.

"The facts fit. Old railway workers populate much of this cemetery. The unique characters, "Hoi Sum," the name of a famous imperial official fit my grandmother's description. Few peasants carry such an important name. I couldn't ask for more.

"There is a certain romanticism surrounding recovered relatives. The man I respect is a hero of hard labour. Had he really been my grandfather, I would have been proud to be of his line. It is important for the living to tend the dead. I did not come here in search of an ancestor. The fact I found one was good fate."

Like all traditional Chinese, Tham places her trust in the higher powers of fate. In my associations with her cheery, up-to-date insight, I often forget the real age of my friend: born in 1937, before World War Two. Like most survivors in 21st century Canada, she has bank accounts, takes the bus and owns a microwave. She reads the daily *Times Colonist* and laughs at the sensationalism in the media.

Her daily routine consists of writing, reading Singaporean literature and cooking. She walks the streets daily in search of inspiration. She flies home to her daughter for half-year visits every summer. En route, she stops by her publisher in Hong Kong, who secures a typist for her handwritten manuscript.

On occasion, she accompanies trusted friends on fishing trips.

However, her modern perception is based on traditional values. Tham often tends the graves in Foul Bay Cemetery. While arthritis has made it difficult for her to bend her knees to place offerings of flowers on the graves, she keeps up her ritual.

Developing these tensions into an obsessive professionalism makes it possible for the reader to like her – after all, her duality is focused upon granting her audience the best possible book. An affinity for romanticism makes her split personality acceptable, even likable.

Our interview ends with her picking up garbage from the cemetery grounds and informing me that she likes gulls.

"Put that in your profile, forget everything else I said," she laughs, watching a seagull fly low overhead. "Come here, gull!" She whistles at the gull and tries to guide it towards us, tossing a half-full pop can at it.

I watch as the gull cries and circles away, its white feathers turn cola brown.

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FILM REVIEW/RANT

Traffic stalls under scrutinizing headlights of race and class

by Emmanuel Raymundo

After an almost decade-long slump on the heels of his 1989 critically acclaimed movie, *Sex, Lies and Videotape*, Steven Soderbergh has returned with a vengeance starting with his 1998 *Out of Sight* and stretching to last year's blockbuster *Erin Brockovich*. His achievements have culminated with five Golden Globe nominations, including Best Picture, for his latest movie, *Traffic*.

With critics from New York to Vancouver and all points in between trying to find new superlatives to describe the movie, I thought I was in for a real treat.

Traffic is the story of America's "war on drugs" with an interwoven storyline involving US and Mexican drug agents, cartel kings and Ohio State Supreme Court judge Robert Wakefield (Michael Douglas) whose 16-year-old daughter is an addict.

The most troubling, disappointing and regressive part of *Traffic* is how the viewer's emotion, sympathy and concern are invested in Wakefield's daughter, Caroline (Erika Christenson), who becomes addicted to crack. The story aims to get the audience to see the disastrous effects of drug addiction by putting a human face to drugs and indeed, why "we" are fighting this war to begin with.

My question is: why always the white girl?

The film is purposely protective and sympathetic towards the daughter and the white female body. In a detention centre, this white girl lists her achievements to a detention officer. The camera, and the viewer's attention, are squarely on the white girl's face as she rhymes off her achievements: third in her class, straight A's, volleyball team, a Spanish Club Member, a National Honour Society finalist. She's so angelic that she even volunteers reading to the blind. For two hours. Every week.

While her audience within the film is the detention officer, she is clearly making her case to the audience in the movie theatre to follow her descent to hell with sympathy and understanding for her selfish, destructive free-basing.

Aside from a quick diatribe about the class and racial politics of the drug war spewed by one of the peripheral characters (who is himself white, male, wealthy and a vicious cocaine and heroin abuser), Soderbergh fails to include a balanced treatment of all sides of drug culture.

What about the black people who are hooked into selling these drugs to white people because of interlocking systemic barriers like inaccessible education, lack of training opportunities and high unemployment? What about illustrating what it means when white people driving luxury cars decimate black neighbourhoods? What about showing how these same white people use these places as urinals for their drug habits while maintaining their systemic racial privilege and middle-class respectability? Why is there a paucity of complex, critical and empathic portrayals of minorities when it comes to social issues like drug addiction? Why is white victimization recycled and glorified in movies?

A scene from *Traffic*, Steven Soderbergh's new film about the drug war in the US and Mexico.

In another moment aimed at soliciting the audience's sympathy for Caroline, she explains her addiction by saying that she is "angry." Yeah well, so am I.

I am tired of being presented with character portrayals asking me to be sympathetic towards the elite and the privileged whose only excuse is anger – what an easy disavowal of responsibility. This statement would not solicit sympathy from the public if the girl in the movie had been a poor, black, teenage girl.

The rich white girl's privileged racial and class position mitigates the empathy she receives from an audience. Pretty, rich white girls with so much going for them shouldn't be addicted to drugs and on the streets to turning to feed her habits'. I am tired of being inundated with the idea that only the bodies of white girls matter; other bodies matter, other problems matter, other identities matter.

> I'm tired of being told that only the bodies of white girls matter.

Soderbergh's decision not to portray, for example, a black girl whose brother sells drugs and the destruction it causes her black family (instead of the havoc drug addiction wreaks on a wealthy and privileged white family) must be questioned and held in suspicion. As well as focusing on the rich white girl, most of the movie chronicles the cat-and-mouse game of those at the top of the drug war: the drug king pins, the special agents and the political bureaucrats.

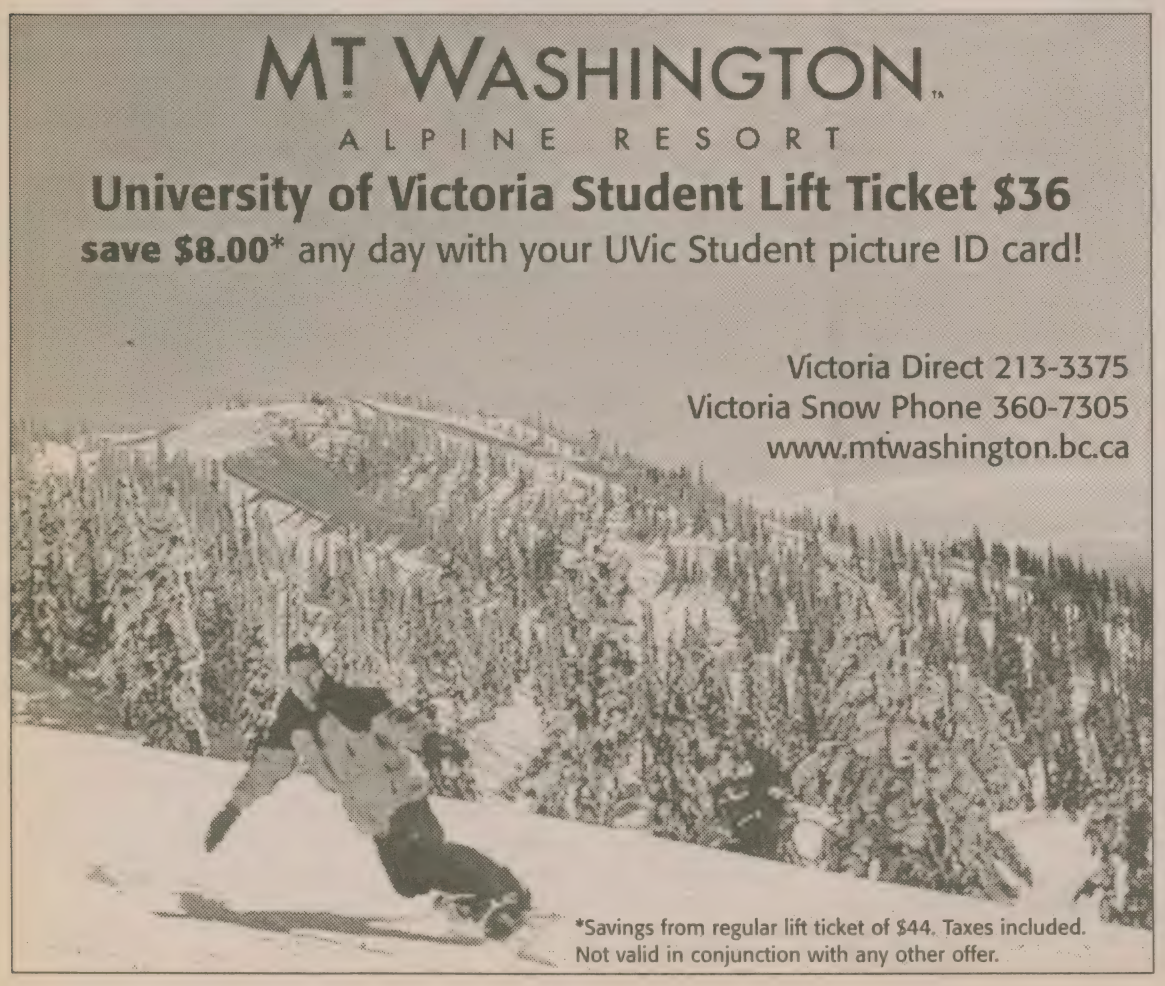
Let's give Soderbergh his credit; he's a smart man. That being said, his directorial and editorial choice to focus on a white girl and a white family entrenches stereotypes. Of course, we should be able to extend compassion to all people in need and despair – be they white, black, Russian or Kenyan drug addicts. However, should white people/the ruling class elite/white girls/white female bodies be the measuring barometer for the graveness and severity of a social ill?

In the packed theatre where I saw *Traffic*, the most deafening audience gasps came during the scene when Caroline was being fucked by her drug dealer. Filmed in a technically arresting way, the scene shows her smooth white face, her rumpled blond hair framing her glazed eyes, peering over a well-muscled black shoulder thrusting up and down. This fucking is interrupted only when the dealer has to get up off the white girl to do a drug deal with a junkie at his door. After finishing the transaction, the black drug dealer then gives the white girl a hot shot of fresh heroin and resumes fucking her. It doesn't seem to be bad enough that drugs can turn you into a stealing, lying, triflin' little whore, what's worse (the movie seems to whisper) is that drug addiction is so bad you may end up being fucked, literally and especially if you're a white girl, by a black man. How scary would that be?

While this interracial fucking may play as no biggie with younger movie goers, this scene and its implicit message is alarming and troubling to older, white, more conservative audiences: drug addiction threatens precious property like daughters. One way this is achieved is through the tried-and-true technique of demonizing the black man as the hypersexual predator. Indeed, the only naked body seen in two-and-a-half hours of the movie is that of the black drug dealer, although the narrative also involves previous fucking between the white girl and her white boyfriend. The black body is hypermasculine, fetishized and stylized: its muscles and tight ass cloak Caroline as if she's been asphyxiated.

What does *Traffic* tell me? The hoopla and fanfare, and the heightened level of seemingly unanimous adoration for this movie prove that the critics aren't always right.

Every year, a select few American film critics heap mountains of praise upon crap films like *Traffic* or last year's *American Beauty*, so they will be consumed by the public both as art and a $10 product. When it comes down to it, *Traffic* is conservative, apologetic Hollywood fare stalled at the corner of race and class.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BOOK REVIEWS

Transcendental wilderness writing alientates urbanites

It is a common conceit to think of a wilderness dweller as being totally self-contained and divorced from the rest of society, but even the most isolated people have some kind of connection with others of their species and I am far from being a hermit.

excerpt, Nuk Tessli: The Life of a Wilderness Dweller

Nuk Tessli: The Life of a Wilderness Dweller
by Chris Czajkowski
Orca Books

by Sandra Walter

Unless you rely on a float plane to get your mail twice yearly, use a solar-powered computer, a log as a desk chair and eat bread bitten by a grizzly, you're not a wilderness dweller, but an ignorant city dweller says Chris Czajkowski.

Czajkowski wrote *Nuk Tessli: The Life of a Wilderness Dweller* to document an interesting part of her life and also to bring attention to environmental issues in an obscure area of British Columbia.

"We are part of nature and nature is part of us. To ignore that is to ignore reality, and I am afraid that is what most people do."

The author of four books, including *Diary of a Wilderness Dweller* and now, *Nuk Tessli*, Czajkowski is an established writer, artist, naturalist and environmentalist.

Her most recent book is a compilation of diary entries, letters to friends, compositions that Czajkowski wrote for the CBC radio show *Morningside*, and excerpts from magazine articles, such as "Wildflower and Cordillera." She draws on knowledge gained over years as a tree planter and a wilderness dweller.

The book offers verbal portraits of the wilderness that Czajkowski is known for. "Across the lake, the darkness is separating into shades and the land is beginning to detach itself from the sky," she appropriately begins the prologue. *Nuk Tessli* includes a variety of forms, from straight prose to literary quotes, poetic language and drawings. The drawings are a neat touch, giving the reader a glimpse of what life looked like through Czajkowski's eyes.

The author lightens the tone of the book by including humorous descriptions and episodes such as her encounter with a bear.

"That the bear was literate could not be discounted: during his second break-in he had chomped a Scrabble game which, along with the thesaurus he had chewed on his first visit, proved him to be a bear with a definite fondness for letters."

The fact that *Nuk Tessli* takes place virtually in our backyards makes it somehow more relevant. Czajkowski transports the reader between the outside world and her natural world, emphasizing the differences between them, but also making the reader realize that the two worlds aren't far apart.

"It is a common conceit to think of a wilderness dweller as being totally self-contained and divorced from the rest of society, but even the most isolated people have some kind of connection with others of their species and I am far from being a hermit."

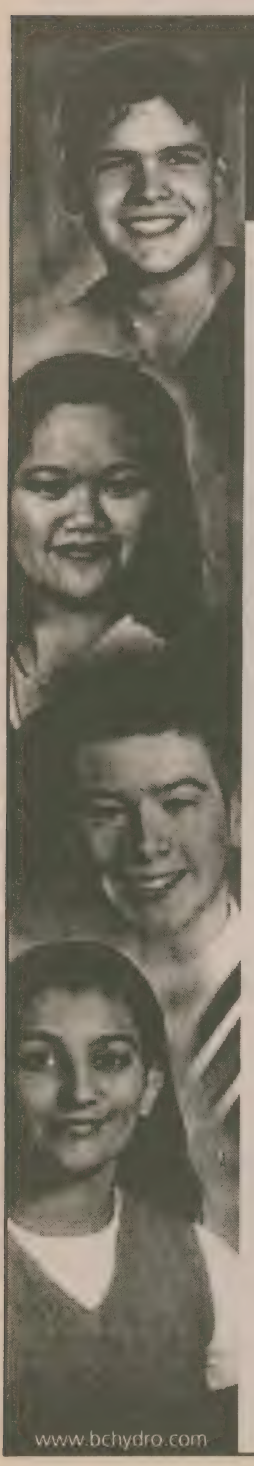
Czajkowski relies on the outside world, depending on supplies to be brought in to her site via float plane. Despite that luxury, Czajkowski still lives largely off her own resourcefulness.

Ideas surrounding conservation not only guide the book, they become irrepressible in Czajkowski's final arguments.

"We are no longer nibbling at isolated environments, which cannot be affected much more than a days' walk beyond the nearest center of population, but at the whole world at once."

Perhaps her point would be more effective if she didn't alienate herself when she makes a huge distinction between "wilderness dwellers" and "city folk." Czajkowski's segregation of the population into these two groups will likely turn readers off, because almost everyone who reads her book is a "city dweller" in some way.

However, no reader can get away from *Nuk Tessli* without learning something useful, about plants, animals, weather patterns or single-handedly building a cabin without a back hoe and a brigade of carpenters. Despite her abrupt method of bringing attention to environmental concerns, Czajkowski does make some good points and the beauty of the wilderness described in *Nuk Tessli* is a delight to read.



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THE POWER IS YOURS
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Writer's new book explores tragedies of Rwanda and Yugoslavia

by Olivia Brown

GUELPH (CUP) – She has seen mass graves and felt the damp chill of torture rooms. She has walked through the hollow remains of a country subjected to the most brutal forms of genocide. Now, Carol Off wants to expose the true villains and heroes of the conflicts in Rwanda and Yugoslavia, embarking on an extensive tour to promote her new and controversial book, *The Lion, the Fox and the Eagle*.

The award-winning journalist was sent to report on the emerging Peace Accord in Yugoslavia. She soon realized that the media coverage she had been following in Toronto did not truly depict the atrocities of a war where there was such a stark distinction between victim and perpetrator. As her investigation into both the Eastern European and African conflicts continued, Off saw the immense potential to correct some of the misunderstandings created by a gingerly non-committal North American media, and an equally irresponsible UN.

Off hopes her book counteracts a "dangerous (political and media) campaign, which is attempting to create a kind of revisionism," a campaign, which, she feels, seriously downplays the severity of the conflicts. She is worried that the rhetoric embraced by national media, such as how using the word "ethnic cleansing" instead of "genocide" has strategically belittled the massive acts of bloodshed inflicted on groups of innocent civilians. Concerned that the truth regarding the UN's mishandling of these problems will be lost, Off's book spearheads a reactionary campaign which she says "struggles to keep the truth alight."

A few years ago, however, Off felt very differently. She believed the conflicts in Rwanda and Yugoslavia to be nothing more than clan wars, ethnically driven skirmishes between two almost indistinguishable groups of "crazy people" with deep grudges. Now, on the cusp of launching her book, Off says she is "deeply ashamed" to have been so easily swayed by the dismissive treatment of these conflicts by the media.

"If I misunderstood the severity of what was happening in these conflicts surely other people did too," she says.

The Lion, the Fox and the Eagle illuminates the struggle faced by three Canadians: Generals Romo Dallaire and Lewis MacKenzie, and Judge Louise Arbour, who became the chief prosecutor for the Rwandan and Yugoslavian war crimes tribunals. Through her own intensive research as well as input from the three key Canadian players, Off points an accusing finger at the UN, saying it refused to respond to a warning that could have prevented 800,000 brutal murders in Rwanda. She also holds the UN responsible for such a belated comprehension of the severity of the "ethnic cleansing" administered against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

Off draws the threads of her narrative from many different sources, including the young Canadian peacekeepers who were forced to remain neutral in the face of conflicts where the boundary between right and wrong was evident.

"Imagine," she says, "the trauma for a 20-year-old peacekeeper who must stand idly by while a pregnant mother is shot in the stomach, or the limbs of an innocent civilian are cut off one by one." Peacekeepers suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome, as well as, Off says, feelings of emptiness caused by commanding officers who tell you "that you don't care or that you are unable to determine the wronged from the wrong-doers, even though the difference is glaringly obvious." Once a self-described "peace-nik," Off now sees the benefit in creating and maintaining a stronger Canadian military. "Our military is an international joke," she says, adding that she advocates for more military funding. "It's embarrassing."

Although often horrifyingly brutal, the information in Off's work bombards readers with astonishing revelations of the shortcomings of our own defense system, and enlightens readers to the shocking irresponsibility of a UN which had the power to prevent these acts of brutal mass genocide, but instead, sat back and let the slaughter continue.

CIAU basketball standings

Men's

Canada West

	G	W	L	Pt.	Pct.
Alberta	12	11	1	22	.917
Victoria	**12**	**8**	**4**	**16**	**.667**
Lethbridge	12	6	6	12	.500
Calgary	12	6	6	12	.500
Trinity Western	12	6	6	12	.500
Simon Fraser	12	5	7	10	.410
Saskatchewan	12	5	7	10	.410
UBC	12	4	8	8	.333

GPAC

	G	W	L	Pt.	Pct.
Brandon	10	8	2	16	.800
Manitoba	10	5	5	10	.500
Winnipeg	10	3	7	6	.300
Regina	10	1	9	2	.100

Women's

Canada West

	G	W	L	Pt.	Pct.
Victoria	**12**	**9**	**3**	**18**	**.750**
Simon Fraser	12	8	4	16	.667
Calgary	12	8	4	16	.667
UBC	12	6	6	12	.500
Saskatchewan	12	6	6	12	.500
Alberta	12	4	8	8	.333
Trinity Western	12	1	11	2	.080
Lethbridge	12	0	12	0	.000

GPAC

	G	W	L	Pt.	Pct.
Regina	10	9	1	18	.900
Manitoba	11	8	3	16	.720
Winnipeg	11	7	4	14	.630
Brandon	10	3	7	6	.300

CIAU National Rankings
Men's Basketball

Last week's ranking in parenthesis

1. St. Francis Xavier (2)
2. Western Ontario (1)
3. Brandon (6)
4. McMaster (5)
5. Carleton (4)
6. Alberta (3)
7. St. Mary's (9)
8. Concordia (7)
9. York (8)
10. **Victoria** **(10)**

January 9/2001

Women's Basketball

1. Regina (2)
2. **Victoria** **(1)**
3. Manitoba (3)
4. Laval (9)
5. Winnipeg (5)
6. Calgary (4)
7. SFU (6)
8. UBC (10)
9. Dalhousie (NR)
10. Laurentian (7)
10. Alberta (8)

January 9/2001

Canada West/GPAC Basketball Results

Friday, Jan. 5
Winnipeg, Manitoba

M: Victoria 78, Winnipeg 68

UVic: Ali Wilmott: 23 pts; Jason Crawford: 19 pts, 10 rebounds; Keith Bustard: 15 pts, 8 rebounds.

W: Victoria 65, Winnipeg 59

UVic: Lindsay Anderson, 21 pts; Kim Johnson, 17 pts.

Saturday, Jan. 6
Winnipeg, Manitoba

M: Victoria 77, Winnipeg 63

UVic: Ali Wilmott, 20 pts; Keith Bustard 18, 8 rebounds.

W: Victoria 64, Winnipeg 72

UVic: Kim Johnson, 36 pts; 6 x 3 pt. field goals

The Magnificent One returns: buckle up!

The Pittsburgh Penguin's Mario Lemieux: Scoring Champion, NHL team owner, hall of famer, human highlight reel. Iain McCletchie discusses "The Magnificent's" sudden exit from retirement after a three-and-a half year absence from the game.

Magnificent – *Impressive because of beauty, richness, or splendour.*

Mario "Le Magnifique" Lemieux has returned to hockey. Oh yeah. Let the games begin.

Forget all the implications this brings regarding Lemieux being an owner and whether he will be able to vote as a member of the NHL Players Association. Forget about whether he returned in order to raise the value of the Pittsburgh franchise or if he returned in order to keep Jaromir Jagr happy. Forget about how he'll pay himself, and forget about his age.

This is Mario Lemieux, arguably the most physically talented player ever to lace up a pair of skates. For the 12 seasons that he played NHL hockey the guy was skill and grace personified. And when he retired in 1997 (premature as a 14 year old boy), he took along with him his third Art Ross trophy as the league's scoring champion yet again.

His best season was 1988-89 when he scored 199 points in 76 contests. That's 2.62 points per game! Lemieux played with Dan Quinn and Wendell Young that year, two of the biggest nobodies in the Wales Conference. If Mario had been given some talent on his wings instead of a carrot and two sticks of celery, he would have shattered all of Gretzky's season records.

This is the guy who scored for "the cycle" against New Jersey, New Years Eve, 1988: On a powerplay, shorthanded, even strength, penalty shot and into an empty net.

This is the guy who scored while flat on his back against the old Minnesota North Stars. This is the guy who went shelf on the Soviets to win the 1987 Canada Cup, arguably the last great moment in Canadian hockey. This is the guy who won the Art Ross after being treated for Hodgkins Disease (lymphatic cancer) and a bollocksed back.

The verdict is in: Mario Lemieux was professional sport's "Human Highlight Reel" of the late 80s and early 90s, regardless of Dominique Wilkins' (of the NBA's Atlanta Hawks) dodgy aspirations to that honour.

Now, Lemieux says he thinks the Penguins have a chance to win the Stanley Cup this year with him in the lineup. In fact, a survey on a prominent sports website has 22 per cent of respondents favouring the Pens' to win it all. While much of this is mere opinion, the Penguins are now sporting a pretty spectacular offensive nucleus.

Lemiuex, Jagr, Alexi Kovalev, Robert Lang and Martin Straka are all bonafide gunners, and thus the Penguins will have to live and die by the old "the best defence is a good offence" axiom.

So while they will be bloody fun to watch, they may not get too far in Lord Stanley's playoffs, where tight checking and good defence wins. All this being said, the point is that Lemieux's return is great for hockey.

The league needs a huge superstar. Gretzky's gone, Lindros is done, and Messier is out of miracles. Mario's return has brought a buzz that hasn't been heard in a long time. Just the other day a buddy came out of the closet – and straight to the band wagon – and informed me that he'd always been a Penguins fan and that Mario was his favourite player. Good man.

I've stood by the Pens' ever since they picked Lemieux first overall in 1983, and was cursing heartily a couple days ago when I realized that I'd thrown out my Lemieux scrapbook, filled with clippings from various newspapers and hockey magazines.

You can bet your tuition that I watched his first game back (against the Leafs on Dec. 27) with a box of tissue and a pile of childhood memories. Of course, the big guy returned in style, setting up Jagr 32 seconds into the first period and finishing with three points. Ah yes, life was splendid at that moment.

Now, while the Lemieux and the Penguins are blazing hot right now, they likely won't stay that way. That's alright, though. In fact, with 14 points in five games (as of Tuesday), it would be insanity to think Lemieux could keep his pace up for the rest of the season. But that's not really the point.

Mario Lemieux has brought back the excitement that hockey has been desperate for. And for that reason alone we'll keep watching him in ecstacy.

Mario Lemieux: By the Numbers

# Stanley Cup rings:	2
# Hart Trophies (League MVP)	3
# Art Ross Trophies (League scoring title)	6
# Conn Smythe Trophies (Playoff MVP)	2
# Calder Trophies (Rookie of the year)	1
# NHL All-Star selections	8
# All-Star MVP awards	3

Yr	GP	G	A	Pts
1984	73	43	57	100
1985	79	48	93	141
1986	63	54	53	107
1987	77	70	98	168
1988	76	85	114	199
1989	59	45	78	123
1990	26	19	26	45
1991	64	44	87	131
1992	60	69	91	122
1993	22	17	20	37
1994		Did Not Play		
1995	70	69	92	161
1996	76	50	72	122
Totals	745	613	881	1494

Career Goals Per Game Average: 0.83 – Highest in NHL history.

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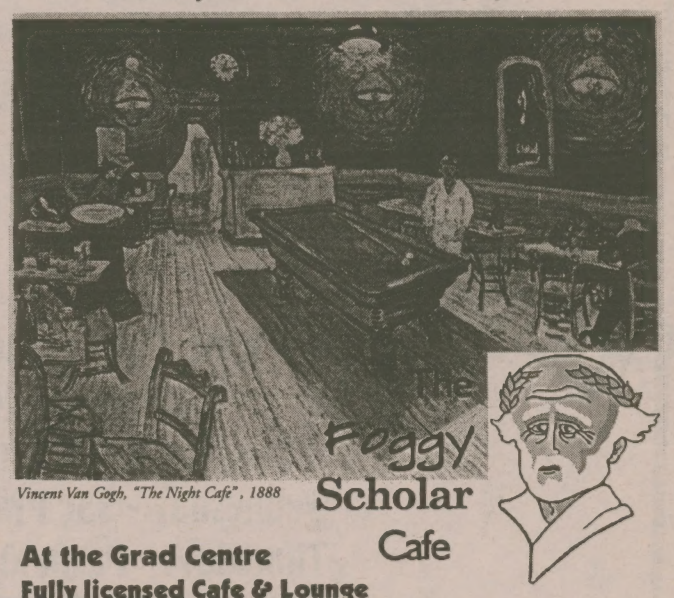

Vincent Van Gogh, "The Night Cafe", 1888

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Martlet sports best of 2000: Part 1

With the close of another calender year (and the second millennium) it seems fitting to recall the highlights and lowlights of the past 12 months of sport and sports writing at the University of Victoria.

On the Vikes front: some brilliant highs (national championships in women's basketball and field hockey) as well as a few notable disappointments – double bronze place finishes by the men's and women's soccer teams)

But *the Martlet* has looked far beyond just varsity athletics. Sports related stories on topics as diverse as homosexuality, movies and sex graced the pages of this newspaper in 2000.

So, for the record, here is the first installment of the best of Y2K as reported by the men and women of *the Martlet* sports staff.

January 13:

In their first weekend of Canada West conference play after the Christmas hiatus, the UVic basketball teams played host to the Lethbridge Pronghorns. The men's game Friday night turned out to be, perhaps, the Vikes greatest victory of the season.

As conference leaders and the number two ranked team in Canada, undefeated Lethbridge was expected to have their way with the five-hundred Victoria team.

In the event, the Vikes' Ali Wilmott sent the game into overtime with a clutch trey in the dying seconds of the second-half.

"The Vikes were nearly perfect in the five-minute overtime period, shooting 100 per cent from the field and behind the three-point arc," wrote sports editor Craig Battle. "The Vikes grabbed a lead and clung to it, winning the game 89-83."

The loss would prove to be only one of three suffered by the 'Horns all season.

January 27:

In reporting on a women's indoor field hockey tournament, Maya Samson demonstrated that gymnasiums and alcohol abuse do not a good reporter make:

"My role as an observer and a fan began too early on Saturday morning... Against my better judgement I had been drinking late the night before and consequently showed up late for the first game of round robin play.

"Having last been a gymnasium for a junior high dance, my already clouded senses were immediately overwhelmed by the strange environment. What is it about the acoustics of such a place that make you feel as if you were drowning in sound?

"That peculiar sensation, along with the constant shrill cries of the referees whistle did little to ease the aching of my head of the nagging suspicion that this even was staged to torment me."

(Editor's note: the Vikes finished the tournament in third place.)

February 10:

For last year's Queer Issue, co-sports editor Dena vanDalfsen wrote about the relationship between her small town, athletics and homosexuality:

"I come from a small town where homophobia and heterocentric attitudes still run rampant...

"As far as coaches, parents and many students are concerned, gay or lesbian athletes do not exist on the high school sports teams or on the hockey teams...

"When I returned home for the summer, the rumor mill was buzzing with the news that two guys had who had graduated recently had come out. Both of these guys had been involved in sports... They both were athletic, smart and well-like in the community...

"This is happening all over the world, in every community and at all sporting levels."

–compiled by *Martlet* Sports Staff

photo by Richard Warrington

On Saturday morning, the Vikes men's vollyball team played Nanaimo's Malaspina College as part of a day long tourny.

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Women's basketball round up

by Jeremy Shragge

While most students were relaxing around the house, snowboarding in the Interior, vacationing in Mexico, or doing whatever else they do over the Christmas break, the players of the University of Victoria women's basketball team were busting their asses on the hardwood.

The defending national champions were either practicing or competing 10 out of the 11 days between Boxing Day and last Friday.

For instance, from December 29 to 31 the UVic squad travelled to Calgary for the Dinos Holiday Hoop Classic. Ranked number one in Canada entering the mid-season/ Christmas hiatus, the 8-2 Vikes took on a trio top-10 teams in the three-day tournament.

In their opening match, Victoria beat the number two ranked Regina Cougars, the only team to best the Vikes so far in the regular schedule, 79-68.

The next day, against the Laval Rouge et Or (ranked 9th), Victoria suffered their first loss (in either exhibition or conference play) since October 28, going down by a score of 62-59.

On the eve of the new millennium, the Vikes clashed with the University of Toronto Lady Blues in their final match of the 20th century. Led by small forward Kim Johnson and her 21 point performance, Victoria crushed the wayward Ontarians, 71-45.

The next weekend, January 5-6, Canada West/Great Plains Athletic Conference (GPAC) play resumed with a full slate of matches. The conference leading Vikes, looking to extend their eight game regular season winning streak, were off to the Manitoba capital to challenge the number five ranked University of Winnipeg Lady Wesmen.

Unfortunately, when they hit the parquet Friday night, the Island team was firing on fewer than all cylinders. According to Vikes fifth year forward Angela Mangan, several factors contributed to the team's less than inspiring start, which Mangan sardonically described as "sluggish."

Several back court players, including starting shooting guard Lindsay Anderson, had been beset with the flu since the Calgary trip. In addition, two of Victoria's veteran posts, Mangan and Lindsay MacDonald, remained plagued by foot and back injuries, respectively. With the consecutive weeks of travelling thrown into the mix, Friday's weak first-half becomes a little easier to understand.

"We weren't playing the defence that we were supposed to," Mangan said. "That's what the Vikes program has been all about: playing the strongest defence in the country."

After a stern homily from Coach Kathy Shields at the break, the UVic squad pulled themselves together and came out of the locker room breathing fire.

"We had so much fun [in the second-half]," said Mangan. "Winnipeg couldn't believe we were the same team." At the final buzzer the visitors had pulled out a 65-59 victory.

On Saturday night, Victoria started with a similar lack of intensity and organization as they had 24 hours earlier; except this time there would be no second-half renaissance. Out worked on the boards and defensively shaky, the Vikes fell 72-64.

In fact, one could argue that small forward Kim Johnson was the only UVic player to make an appearance before halftime, counting for 24 of her team's 28 first period points. Johnson finished the night with a game high 36, including six three-point bombs.

"We didn't have five people on the floor on Saturday night. There were five bodies but not five players," Mangan said with evident displeasure.

With the loss, the Vikes relinquished their number one ranking to the Cougars, who improved their GPAC leading record to 9-1 with a pair of home victories over the Dinos.

This weekend the Vikes play host to the 3-7 Brandon Bobcats. The pair of matches represent an opportunity for the Victoria squad to regain their national position.

"We need to start playing with some urgency," said Mangan.

ON CAMPUS

UVSS presents Open Mike Night and Welcome Back Coffeehouse... Join us Tues. Jan. 16 on the new comfy couches in the SUB Upper Lounge at 7 p.m. for some great tunes and original poetry. Open mike signup begins at 6:45 p.m. Everyone welcome!

Martlet.org needs web volunteers! Volunteers needed to help put up website – no prior experience needed. Claim computer/web experience on your resume! Weekly tutorials on Fridays in SUB B011.

Fridaymusic, 12:30 p.m. (admission by donation) at Philip T. Young Recital Hall. School of Music keyboard students.

"Ring-Out" the week with Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship every Friday night! Everyone is welcome to join us for Praise, Worship, Singing, Prayer, Fellowship and Teaching! Have a Bible? Bring it! See you Friday nights for Ring-Out in Cle C 112 at 7:30 p.m.

VOLUNTEERS

Attention students in Education, Biology, Geography, and Environmental Studies – gain valuable career experience through volunteering at Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary. Volunteer positions include nature interpretation with school children, trail building and nature house receptionist. For more details on these or other opportunities, contact Joan at 479-0211 or email jcowly@swanlake.bc.ca

Use your new year's resolution to help someone enhance their quality of life! Many people with disabilities are motivated to participate in new activities but are in need of assistance! Recreation Integration Victoria is looking for volunteers to provide one-on-one assistance for people with disabilities in a recreational setting. To get involved or for more information, please call Mark at 477-6314.

TUTORS

English/Philosophy. Essay critique, proofreading, assignment discussion, etc. Enjoy learning but need a little assistance to fulfill your potential? I can help. Call Janet at 595-8438.

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YOUTH CHALLENGE INTERNATIONAL

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre is currently accepting applications for their crisis line volunteer training. Women interested in supporting survivors of sexual violence, call 383-5545 to sign up for an information meeting on **Jan. 17, 24 or 31** at 6 p.m.

Pottery Classes available. Six 2.5 hour classes, $140 + GST. Call 383-5446 for more details.

FOR SALE

Ink cartridges refilled from $4.95 to $14.95. Mayfair Mall (by Toys-R-Us). Island Ink-Jet, 381-9583.

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HEY YOU

Inkberry: Can you believe the two people in the Subaru Outback drinking mochas on Hwy 99? Yuppies or what?

Eris has emerged anew and feels it is her duty to remind us all that chaos is the only sure thing. That and the fact that spreading joy is easy enough if you just lighten up a bit. **Smile!**

SATAN: will my house burn down if I contact Higgins?

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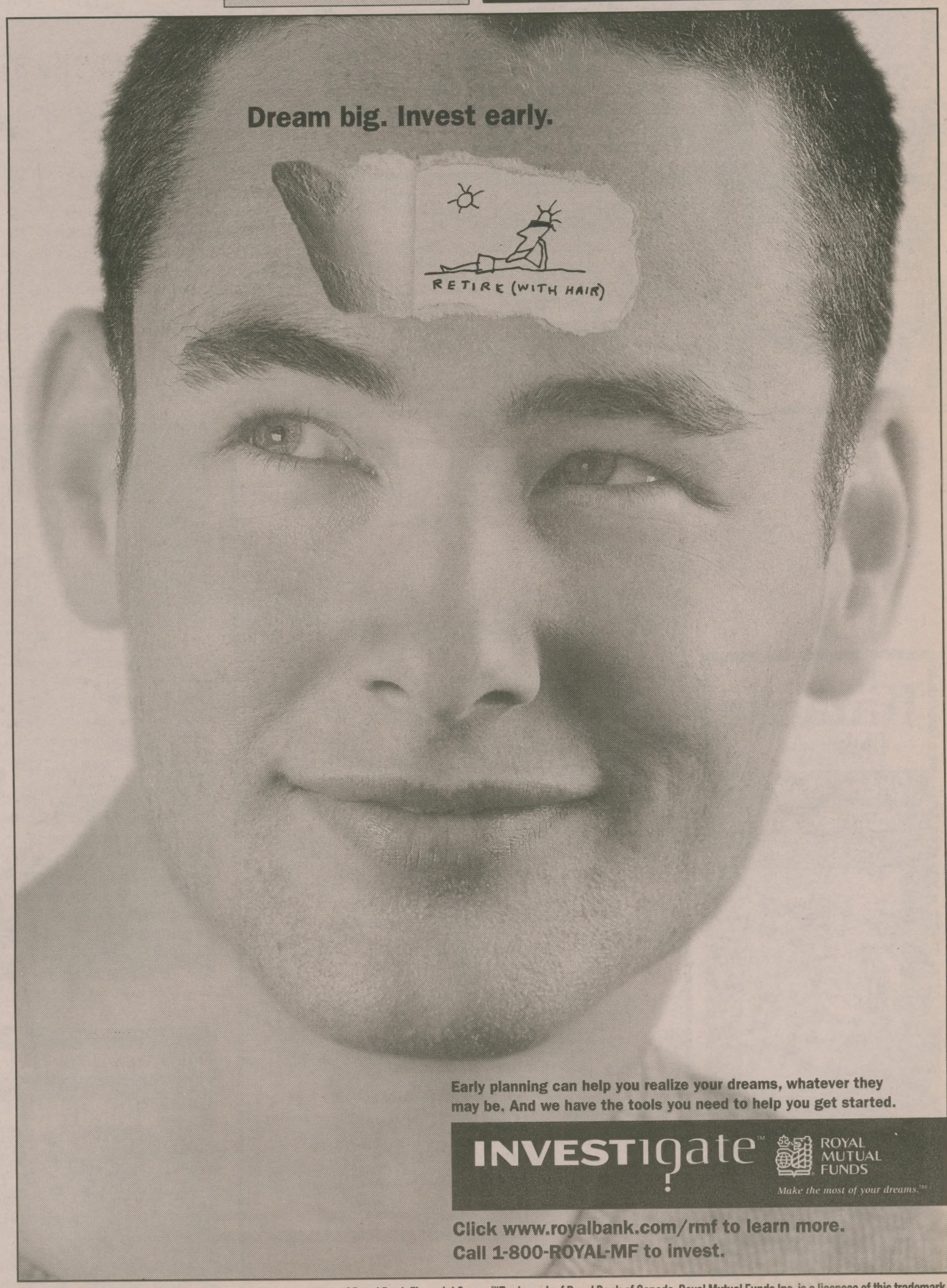
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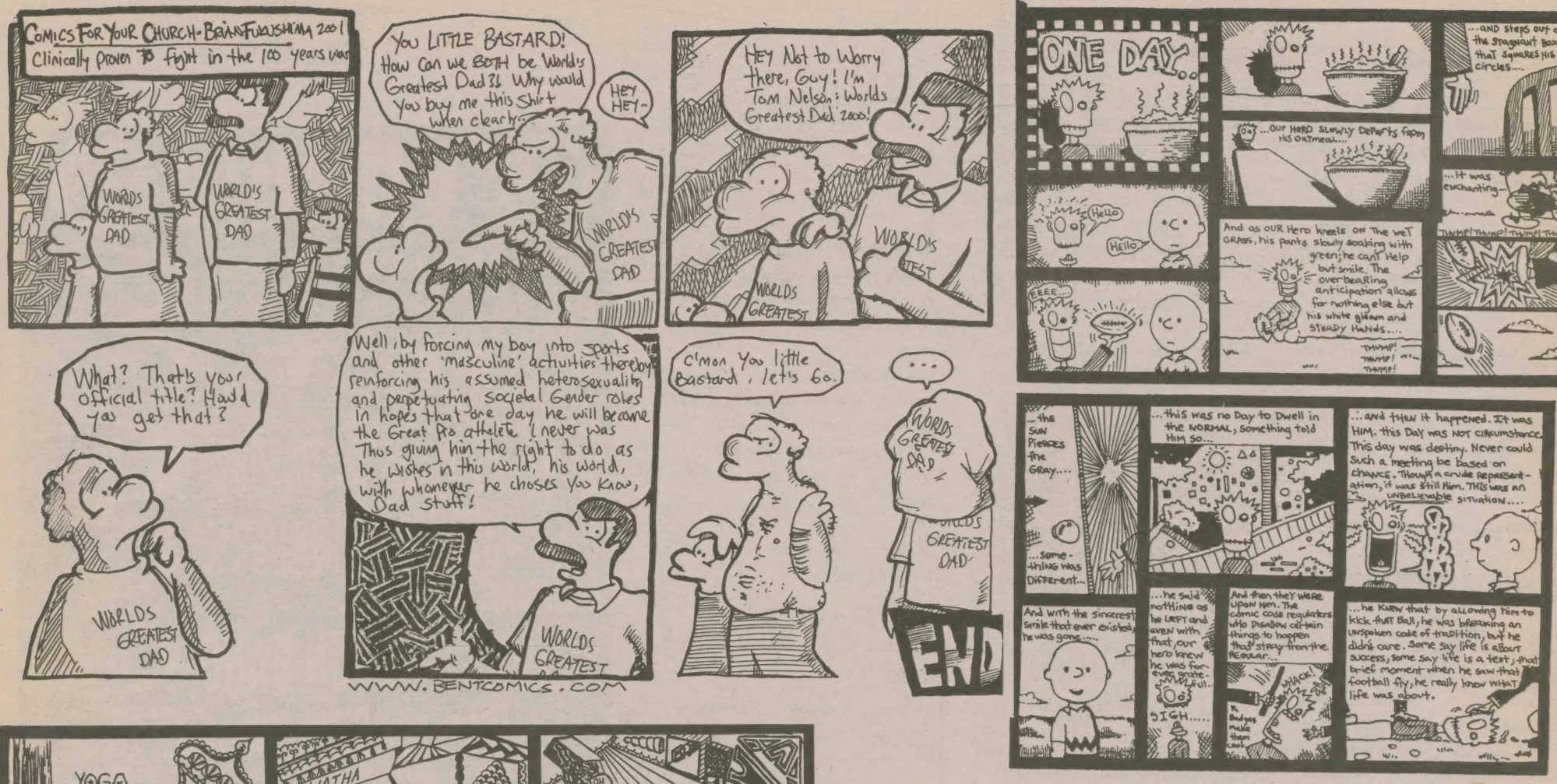
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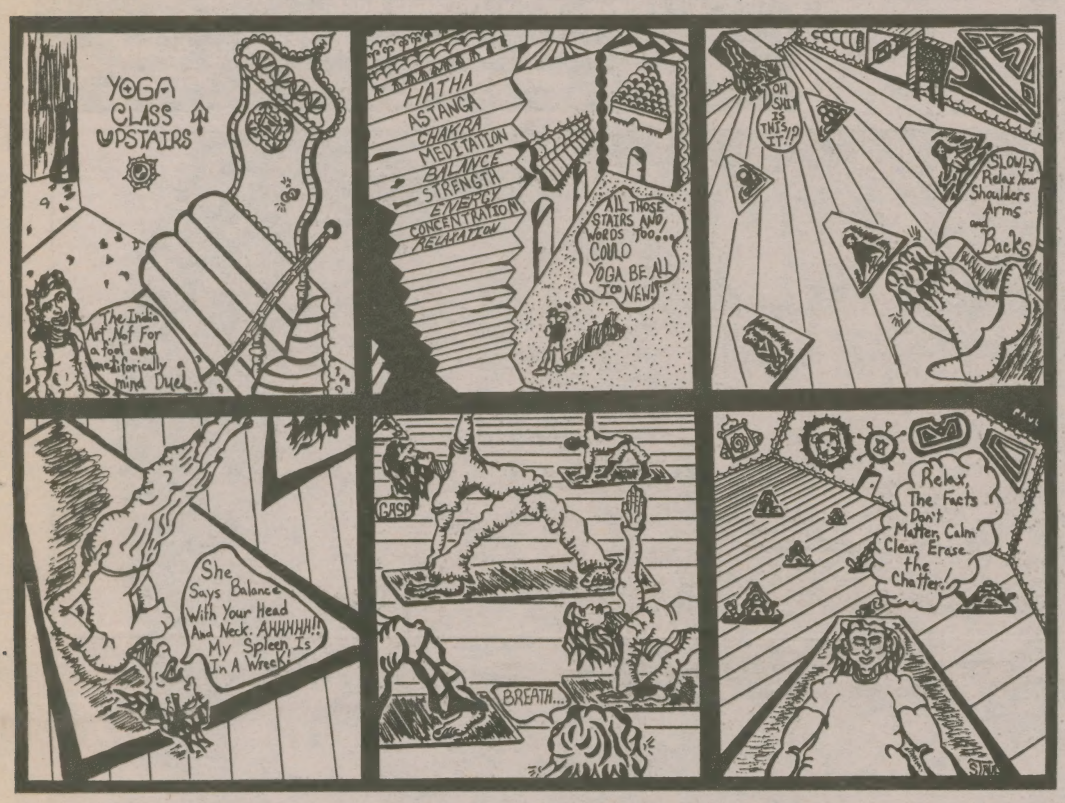
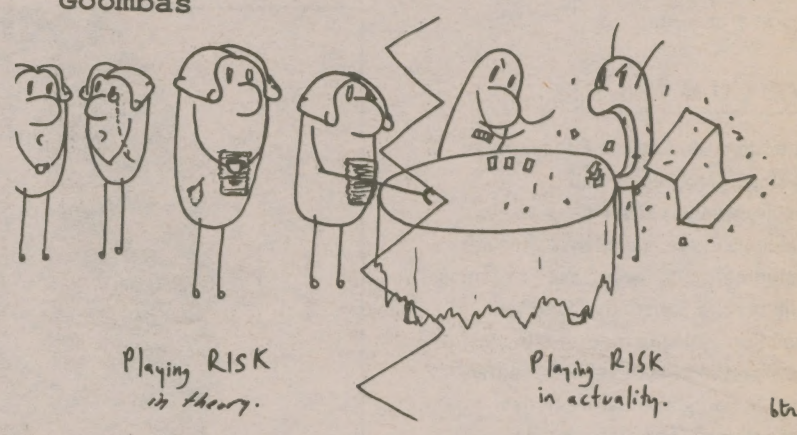
WORLD'S GREATEST DAD
WORLD'S GREATEST DAD
You LITTLE BASTARD! How can we BOTH be World's Greatest Dad?! Why would you buy me this shirt when clearly...
HEY HEY..
WORLD'S GREATEST DAD
Hey Not to Worry there, Guy! I'm Tom Nelson: World's Greatest Dad 2000!
WORLDS GREATEST
WORLD'S TEST
What? That's your official title? How'd ya get that?
WORLDS GREATEST DAD
Well, by forcing my boy into sports and other 'masculine' activities thereby reinforcing his assumed heterosexuality and perpetuating societal Gender roles in hopes that one day he will become the Great Pro athelete I never was Thus giving him the right to do as he wishes in this world, his world, with whomever he chooses You know, Dad stuff!
WORLDS GREATEST
C'mon You little bastard, let's go.
WORLDS GREATEST DAD
END
WWW.BENTCOMICS.COM
ONE DAY...
...OUR HERO SLOWLY DEPARTS FROM HIS OATMEAL...
...AND steps out of the stagnant box that squares his circles...
...It was enchanting...
Hello
Hello
EEEE....
And as OUR Hero kneels on The WET GRASS, his pants slowly soaking with green; he can't Help but smile. The overbearing anticipation allows for nothing else but his white gleam and steady Hands....
THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!
THUMP! THUMP! THUMP! THUM
...the SUN PIERCES the GRAY....
...SOMETHING WAS DIFFERENT...
...this was no Day to Dwell in the NORMAL, something told Him so...
...and then it happened. It was HIM. this DAY was NOT CIRCUMSTANCE. This day was destiny. Never could such a meeting be based on CHANCE. Though a crude representation, it was still Him. This was an UNBELIEVABLE SITUATION....
And with the sincerest smile that ever existed, he was gone.....
...he said nothing as he LEFT and AVEN with that, our hero knew he was forever grateful.
SIGH.....
And then they were upon him. The comic code regulators who disallow certain things to happen that stray from the Regular...
SMACK!
...he KNEW that by allowing him to kick that Ball, he was breaking an unspoken code of tradition, but he didn't care. Some say life is about success, some say life is a test, that brief moment when he saw that football fly, he really knew what life was about.


YOGA CLASS UPSTAIRS
The Indian Art Not For a Fool and Aesthetically Mind Duel...
HATHA
ASTANGA
CHAKRA
MEDITATION
BALANCE
STRENGTH
ENERGY
CONCENTRATION
RELAXATION
ALL THOSE STAIRS AND WORDS TOO... COULD YOGA BE ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE?
OH SHIT IS THIS IT?
SLOWLY Relax Your Shoulders Arms and Backs
She Says Balance With Your Head And Neck. AHHHHH!! My Spleen, Is In A Wreck!
GASP
BREATH...
Relax, The Facts Don't Matter, Calm Clear, Erase the Chatter.

Goombas



6th

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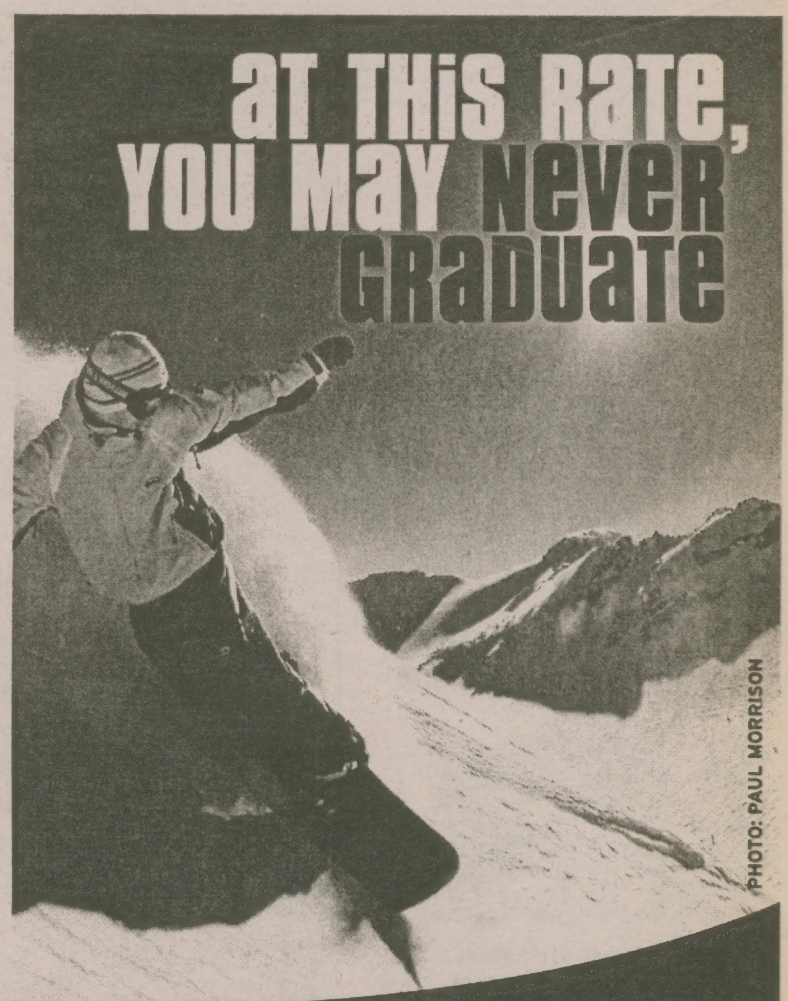

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